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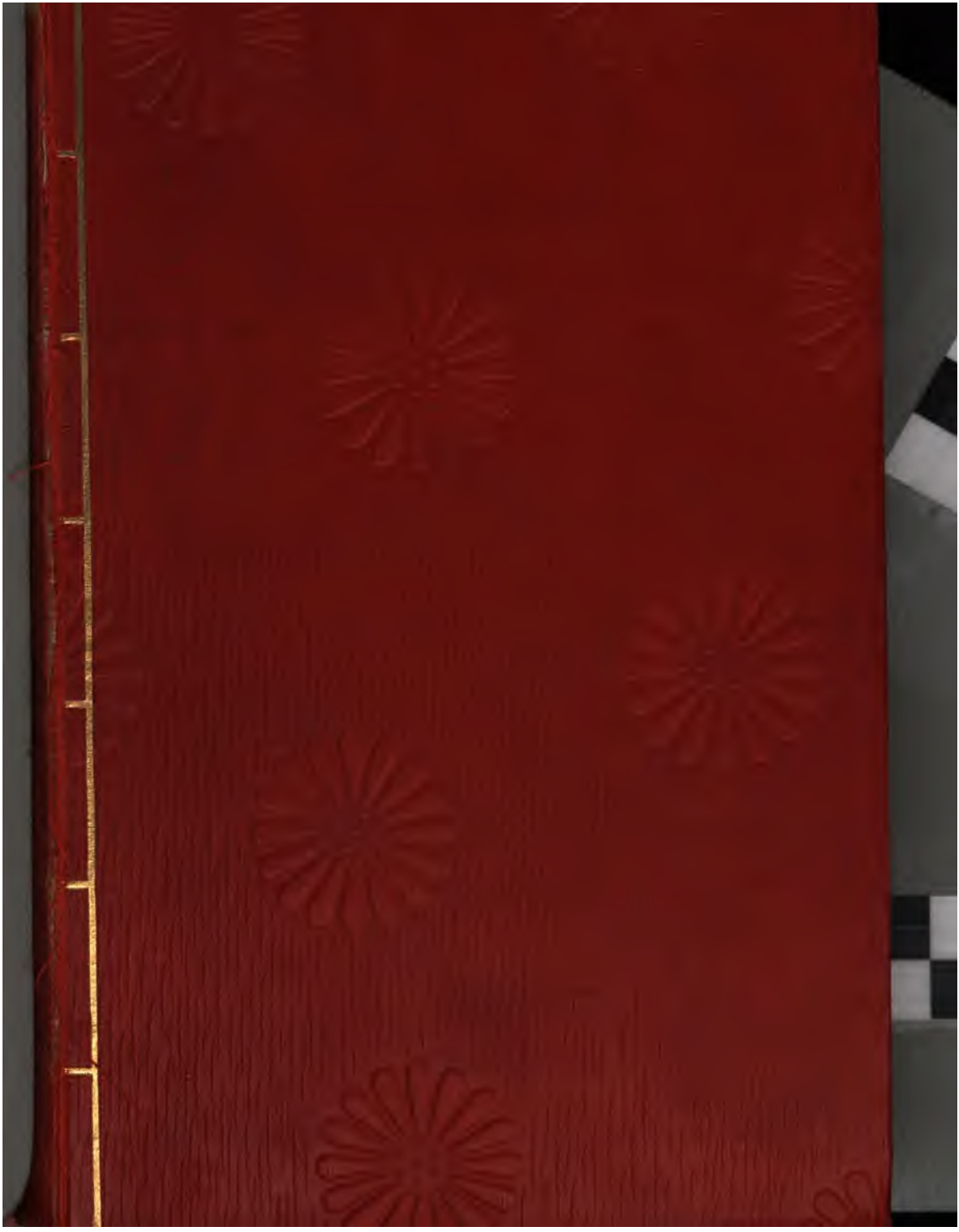

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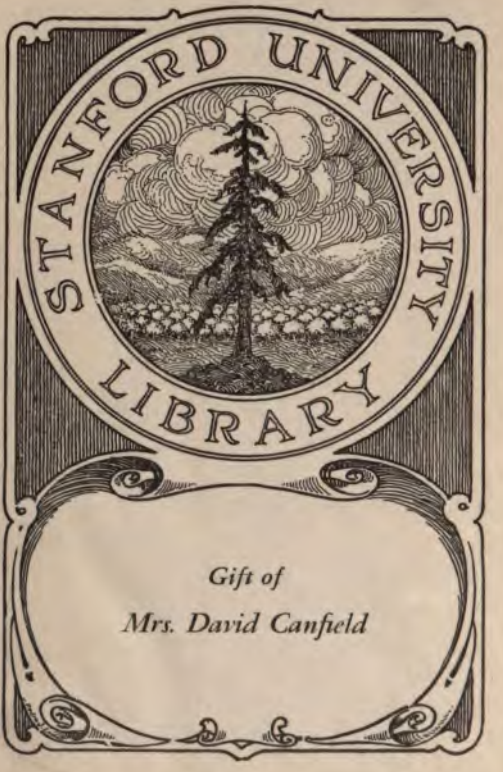

WARRIORS OF OLD JAPAN
AND OTHER STORIES

RUSHED UPON THE MONSTER AND QUICKLY DESPATCHED HIM

(page 33)

WARRIORS OF OLD JAPAN AND OTHER STORIES

日本之武士

日本之武士

BY

YEI THEODORA OZAKI

AUTHOR OF THE JAPANESE FAIRY BOOK

ILLUSTRATED BY SHUSUI OKAKURA AND OTHER JAPANESE ARTISTS

London

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PREFACE

THE kind reception given to "The Japanese Fairy Book" has encouraged me to venture on a second volume of stories from Japan. I have invented none of these stories. They are taken from many different sources, and in clothing them with an English dress my work has been that of adapter rather than translator. In picturesqueness of conception Japanese stories yield the palm to none. And they are rich in quaint expressions and dainty conceits. But they are apt to be written in a style almost too bald. This defect the professional story-teller remedies by colouring his story as he tells it. In the same way I have tried to brighten the rather bare structure of a story, where it seemed to need such treatment, with touches of local colour in order to give emphasis to the narrative, and at the same time make the story more attractive to the foreign reader. Whether I have succeeded or not, the reader must judge for himself. I shall be satisfied if in some small measure I have been able to do for Japanese folk-lore what Andrew Lang has done for folk-lore in general,

and if the tales in their English dress are found to retain the essential features of Japanese stories.

Miss Fusa Okamoto and Mr. Taketaro Matsuda, my brother, Nobumori Ozaki, and one or two friends have given me help in translation.

For the introductory note I am indebted to Mr. J. H. Gubbins, C. M. G., of the British Embassy, Tokyo.

Most of the illustrations have been drawn by Mr. Shusui Okakura, of the Peers' College, to whose painstaking and patient collaboration grateful acknowledgment is due. A few of the pictures were drawn by Mr. Tsutsui, of the "Jiji Shimbun," and some of the historical pictures by Mr. Kokuho Utagawa and Mr. Tosen Toda.

YEI THEODORA OZAKI.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THOSE who three years ago welcomed the appearance of "The Japanese Fairy Book" will be grateful to Madame Ozaki for the new treat afforded in the present volume. "The Japanese Fairy Book" appealed alike to the child, in or out of the nursery, to the student of folk-lore, and to the lover of things Japanese. To all of these the stories here told will come as old friends with new faces.

In a country whose people are born story-tellers, where story-telling long since rose to the dignity of a profession, and the story-teller is sure of an appreciative audience, whether at a village fair or in a city theatre, the authoress had not to go far afield in search of her materials. But the range of this class of literature is wide, embracing as it does all that goes to make folk-lore, legendary history, fairy tales, and myths.

From all these sources the present stories are drawn, and in each case the selection is justified and the story loses nothing in the telling. The simple directness of narrative peculiar to Japanese

tales is not lost in the English setting, and the little glimpses we are given into Japanese verse may tempt the reader to do like Oliver Twist and "ask for more."

J. H. GUBBINS.

TOKYO, May, 1909.

MADAME YUKIO OZAKI

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, BY MRS. HUGH FRASER

IN the attempt to describe a character it is wise to begin, if possible, with its distinguishing attribute, the one which will leave its mark on the time, after the popularity of definite achievements may have passed away. So I will say, before going any further into the subject of this sketch, that if I were asked to single out the person who, to-day, most truly apprehends the points of contact and divergence in the thought of East and West, I would name the gentle dark-eyed lady who is the light of an ancient house in the loveliest part of Tokyo, a spot where, as she sits under the great pines of her garden, she can hear the long Pacific rollers breaking on the white beaches of Japan and listen to the wind as it murmurs its haunting songs of other homes in distant lands where she is known and loved. For though Yei Theodora Ozaki is a daughter of the East in heart and soul and parentage, one to whom all the fine ways and thoughts of it come by nature, she is also a child

of the West in training, in culture, in the intellectual justice which enables her to discern the greatnesses and smile indulgently at the littlenesses of both.

Her father, Baron Saburo Ozaki, the descendant of a Kyoto *samurai* family, a member of the House of Peers, and a Privy Councillor, was one of the first Japanese who went to England to study its language and institutions. While there, he made the acquaintance of Miss Bathia Catherine Morrison, and shortly afterwards she became his wife. This lady was the daughter of William Morrison, Esq., a profound scholar and linguist, who would have been more famous had not his attainments, great as they were, been overshadowed by those of his brother, the Rev. Alexander Morrison, whose translations of the works of German philosophers and historians placed much valuable material at the disposal of English readers.

William Morrison's name, however, was known and loved in Japan many years before his little granddaughter Yei (the Illustrious Flower Petal) was born, for he was the instructor of most of the Japanese great men who went to England to learn the ways and speech of modern enlightenment. Prince Mori, Marquis Inouye, Baron Suyematsu, and many others who afterwards rose to eminence, were among his pupils, and when Baron Ozaki became his son-in-law it would have been natural

to conclude that Miss Morrison was fairly familiar already with many sides of the complex Japanese character. But the union was not a happy one; and when, several years later, I made her acquaintance, I thought I could divine the reason. She was a charming and intelligent woman, but she was English to the backbone, and it was impossible for her to appreciate or sympathize with anything that was not British. And Saburo Ozaki was as fundamentally Japanese.

Five years after their marriage they separated, by mutual consent; three little girls, of whom Yei Theodora was the second, remained in England with their mother and received a very thorough English education. Mr. Morrison took great interest in O Yei and brought her many books, which she devoured greedily, having inherited all his love of literature and learning. I have often heard her say that whatever ability she possesses in that direction is due to her English grandfather.

She was just sixteen when Baron Ozaki insisted upon her coming out to live with him in Japan, and she gladly complied with his wishes. On meeting her after their long separation, he was delighted with her charm and grace, and pleasantly surprised to find that in appearance she was quite a Japanese maiden, small and slender, with dark eyes, pale complexion, and a mass of glossy black hair. Accustomed to rule as an autocrat over his

household, he decreed that henceforth she was to be only Japanese. She was quite willing to please him in this, so far as she could; the pretty picturesque ways of her new home appealed to her artistic instinct, and the traditions and ideals of Japanese life at once claimed her for their own; her mental inheritance responded to them joyfully. But this was not quite enough for her father. His duty, from his point of view, was to arrange a suitable marriage for her as soon as possible; but here he met with an unexpected difficulty. The example of her parents' estrangement had inspired the girl with something like terror of the married state, and she had grown up with the resolve not to run the risk of contracting a like ill-assorted union. In consequence, she found herself in opposition to her father, an impossible situation in a Japanese family, and especially undesirable where there were younger children growing up, as in this case, for Baron Ozaki had married again after his return to his own country. Various other circumstances also combined to make her decide at this time to become independent. Her knowledge of English qualified her to give instruction in that language, and her superior education and well-known social position brought her many pupils in a land where teaching is looked upon as the highest of all professions.

In this way many interesting friendships were

formed with Japanese girls, one of whom opened for her the doors of that treasure house of story, the ancient lore and romance of Japan. Here the ardent sensitive mind was in its element. She says: "During those early years I loved the heroes and heroines of my country with passionate and romantic devotion. They were the companions of my solitude, royal and remote, yet near and potential as the white fire of girlhood's idealisms; they peopled my visions with beautiful images, tender and brave and loyal. In those days I was often reproached with being a dreamer, but my dreams were all of fair and noble things. The old stories had taken possession of me: they were a wonder, a joy, an exaltation, though I little imagined that I would ever write them down."

It was during this period of her life that there came a temporary parting of the ways and Europe again claimed O Yei for a time. My husband was the British Minister in Tokyo, and we proposed to Baron Ozaki's daughter that she should come and live with us, acting as my secretary and companion. She accepted, and became not only a dearly loved friend, but an invaluable assistant to me, contributing very materially to the success of my various books on Japan by her profound knowledge of the country and the people. When I returned to Europe she followed me, and remained with us in Italy for about two years. A part of

this time she spent in the house of my brother, Marion Crawford, acting as his amanuensis, and cataloguing his great library with such precision and intelligence that he remarked to me, "Miss Ozaki is a very exceptional person. I had not imagined that the work could be so well done."

My brother discerned her literary talent and first suggested to her that she should write and publish the stories of old Japan which she used to tell in the family circle to the delight of old and young. "You have the gifts of imagination and of language," he said to her. "You really ought to lecture on those stories. You would have a great success."

Italy was a revelation to O Yei; her love of colour and romance was satisfied there, and the never-silent music of the South, the gay yet haunting songs of the people, found a ready echo in her sweet voice, her delicate guitar-playing. But her heart had always turned faithfully to her English mother, and when I went to live in London she passed some time there, contributing her first stories and articles to the English magazines. Then she returned to Japan, where the famous educator, Mr. Fukuzawa, had offered her a post in his school.

Of all her varied experiences this was the strangest. The slight shy girl had a class of two hundred young men and boys to instruct and keep

in order, but from the crowded classroom she returned to the eeriest and loneliest of dwellings. She says: "I lived in the upper storey of an old Buddhist temple, really enjoying the queerness and out-of-the-worldness of it. Under my windows was a graveyard, where on summer nights I used to look for ghosts; but I had a terrible time with the cold and the draughts and the rats, in winter. Sometimes I was awakened at dawn by the sound of gongs and bells, and would look out of my window to see a funeral procession marshalled in the courtyard." In her spare time she continued to write, and various articles and fairy stories of hers appeared in the "Wide World," the "Girls' Realm," and the "Lady's Realm." At last her health broke down and she gave up her post at the school and devoted herself more closely to literary work, which resulted, in 1903, in the publication of "The Japanese Fairy Book," a work which has now become a classic. At the same time she belonged to several of the societies, patriotic, educational, and charitable, by which the Japanese ladies so quietly yet so efficiently aid the cause of true progress in their country. Indeed it was in the interests of Japanese womanhood that she first took up her pen, resolved to dispel the hopeless misconceptions which existed in regard to it in western minds. To use her own words: "When I was last in England and Europe and found by the

questions asked me that very mistaken notions about Japan, and especially about its women, existed generally, I determined if possible to write so as to dispel these wrong conceptions. Hence my stories of Japanese heroines, Aoyagi and Kesa Gozen [in the 'Nineteenth Century'] and Tomaye Gozen, last year ['Lady's Pictorial']. It has been my hope too that the ancient tales and legends, retold in English, may show to the West some of the good old ideals and sentiments for which the Japanese lived and died."

But other than purely studious interests entered into O Yei's life; she had many friends in the Court and Diplomatic circles, and they drew her more and more into society, where she was always a welcome addition to any gathering. She saw every side of the national existence, Imperial, official, scholastic, and was equally intimate with the small but brilliant foreign society. Her single state was a mystery to all except her closest friends; they knew that she had resolved never to marry until she met a man who should fulfil all her ideals.

She met him at last. In 1904 she made the acquaintance of Yukio Ozaki, the Mayor of Tokyo. Each had long known of the other, and various amusing complications had occurred through mistakes of the postman, who, owing to identity of name (there was no connection of family), some-

times got hopelessly confused, and delivered the Mayor's letters to the young lady and the young lady's correspondence to the Mayor. From the moment when the two first met, at a big dinner party, and laughed together over the postman's mistakes, the result was a foregone conclusion. Mr. Ozaki had already learned all that his friends could tell him about the intellectual, attractive girl whose independent, resolute spirit had in no way marred her gentle womanliness; she knew him equally well by reputation — and to hear of Yukio Ozaki, in Japan, is to admire and respect him. Many were the parents, both wealthy and noble, who after his first wife's death would gladly have had him for a son-in-law. His irreproachable morals and elevated character earned for him during this period the title "*Nihon no Dai Ichi no O musoko San*," the "First (best) bridegroom in all Japan." But he too nursed an ideal, and was not to be drawn into new ties until he had found it. Given two such beings, it needed but one kindly touch of Fate's wand to bring them together. The result was a marriage happy in its perfect romance and blest with the deep sympathy of tastes and interests which forms the surest foundation for married felicity.

I returned to Japan a few weeks before the wedding took place, and counted myself fortunate in gaining the friendship of Yukio Ozaki. My first impressions of him could be summed up in a very

few words — strength, calmness, largeness of heart. The fearless glance of his eyes, the noble carriage of his fine dark head, the quiet voice and direct yet eloquent speech — all this was the fitting index to a character which through many long years of public stress and strain has never let even a passing shadow flit over its crystal sincerity and loyalty. Political corruption, temptations of personal ambition, lures of advancement, popular feeling, the outcries of opponents and the applause of adherents, all these have assailed him in vain, have fallen like broken arrows from the shield of his spotless integrity. A Japanese writer says of him: "Mr. Yukio Ozaki has had a wonderful political career. He is a born orator, the most powerful debater, and the ablest writer, in Japan; a staunch fighter for the cause of liberty and the interests of the people; one of the political magnates, and a potent factor in the introduction of the Meiji civilization; a man who is above every form of political corruption; once the Minister for Education, and now the highly renowned mayor of Tokyo who has never missed a single election for the twenty-five Sessions of the Diet of Japan."

Mr. Ozaki is a strenuous and untiring worker. In his character of Mayor no detail is too small for him to go into patiently. Drainage, street cleaning, water supply, market regulations, everything that can conduce to the health and morals of the city

passes under his watchful eyes, and Tokyo is governed marvellously well. His scrupulous conscientiousness leads him to take upon himself a thousand minutiæ which another man would hand over to his subordinates. I shall never forget the searching orders that were promulgated to prepare the capital for the return of the troops from Manchuria. Hundreds of thousands of men, war-worn and ragged, with all their invalids, were to be arriving for months together, and no one could tell what germs of disease might come with them. So before the first detachment reached Shimbashi, a house-to-house visitation was made, the most thorough cleaning and clearing away of rubbish was insisted upon, and the entire foundations of the dwellings as well as out-houses and gateways were copiously sprinkled with chloride of lime. Tokyo sneezed, Tokyo wept, but Tokyo had no epidemics.

Besides all his responsibilities as Mayor, a post which he has filled for seven years, Mr. Ozaki has great political duties to occupy his time. He has steadily refused to attach himself to any party in particular, and, though he has many supporters in the Diet, is an absolutely independent statesman, judging all measures from his only standpoints — right and wrong, and the best interests of the country. This uncompromising attitude has made many enemies for him, but even they admire and respect him, knowing that he is a man who has

said to evil, " Stand thou on that side, for on this am I." [1]

There is another side to his character, the love of all that is beautiful and inspiring. No one who saw the " Triumphal Return " of Admiral Togo can forget the splendid scene of that imposing ceremony, attended by half a million people and so deftly organized that all could see the hero and the man who welcomed him in the country's name. The welcome came from the nation's heart and found adequate expression in Yukio Ozaki's magnificent address, delivered in the voice whose clear tones had ever sounded in the cause of true patriotism. The thrill of deepest feeling was in them that day, and I, who stood near the speaker, saw that his hand trembled and his eyes were suffused with emotion as he welcomed the beloved old sailor back, in glory, to the country he had saved.

One more superb pageant — one where Yukio Ozaki and his bride were host and hostess — returns to my memory, the fête given to Prince Arthur of Connaught in 1906. This was the largest social reunion that has ever taken place in the East, and most regally was the illustrious visitor entertained. In the beautifully wooded park a banqueting pavilion had been erected in the purest style of ancient Japanese architecture, severely harmonious in outline and detail. The interior contained, among

[1] F. W. Myers.

other decorations, a great collection of rare Japanese flowers, shrubs, and dwarf trees — pines and maples hundreds of years old, and, from hoary trunk to new-born feathery branch tip, perfect miniatures of their spreading, towering brethren of the forest. The crowning feature of the day was the *Daimyo's* procession, a mile long, which defiled before our eyes across the great lawns in the open air. For this the last survivors of the feudal epoch had been sought out and brought in from every part of Japan, old *samurai* who had accompanied their imperious masters in many a famous progress and had cut down all and any who had the temerity to cross their path. In joyful arrogance they came to show a degenerate world the martial splendours of their younger days, and the sight was enough to make one overlook the wrongs and dangers of the dead time and only regret that so much colour and fire had to be swept away to make room for the nation's new life.

For things like these all art lovers are grateful to Yukio Ozaki, but his two or three intimate friends have more exquisite moments to thank him for. "Let me take you to my favourite garden," he said one day when I was with him and his wife, "the Garden of the Seven Flowers of Autumn."

The sun was setting as we drove for miles beside the river-bank; leaving the city far behind,

we came, through leafy lanes, to a half-hidden gate through which we passed into a dreamland of misty beauty, all shadowy and subdued in the late October twilight. Great pale moonflowers swung, like scarce-lit lamps, from tree and trellis; feathery autumn grasses waved their plumes below. The dark velvety paths led to dim monuments on whose grey stones we could feel rather than read the deep-cut characters of classic poems. All was imbued with the tender melancholy which brings repose, not pain; and even now, in hours of stress and weariness, my memory turns to the starlit peace that reigns o' nights in the spirit-haunted Garden of the Seven Flowers of Autumn.

Things like these mean more to Yukio Ozaki and his wife than all the social and public side of their existence. Both have the proud delicate reserves of the aristocrat of mind and soul, and escape whenever they can from the publicity which has been forced upon them. It required much persuasion to obtain their permission for this sketch to be published. Madame Ozaki's last words on the subject were: "It is true that my life is varied and exceedingly interesting. One night I may dine at a State banquet with Cabinet Ministers and foreign Ambassadors, or with distinguished visitors like Mr. and Mrs. Taft, who recently visited this country; the next will find me with a purely Japanese party at the Maple Club. I assist at the Court func-

tions, the Imperial wedding receptions; I act as sponsor or go-between at Japanese marriage ceremonies; I see all the ins and outs of Japanese life. I seem to live in the heart of two distinct civilizations, those of the East and the West, but the East is my spirit's fatherland. My mind still turns for companionship to the great ones of the Past, the heroines of my country's history. I find greater pleasure in the old classical drama of the 'No,' with its Buddhist teachings and ideals, its human tragedies of chivalry and of sorrow, than in all the sensational and spectacular modern drama. But my greatest happiness is in my home life, in the companionship of my baby daughter, in the few short hours that my husband can snatch from his work to devote to me. If you must write about us, tell people about Yukio — he is so good and great. I have no wish to be mentioned apart from him."

MARY CRAWFORD FRASER.

NOTE: Mr. Ozaki's collected works have just been published in Japan; they include many essays on public and literary topics, original poems, and a translation into Japanese of the Life of Lord Beaconsfield.

Madame Ozaki's writings include "The Shinto Fire-Walking," "The Hot Water Ordeal," "Nikko Festival," "Singing Insects of Japan," and many

articles on travel and folk-lore, "The Japanese Fairy Book," "Japanese in Time of War," "Japanese Peeresses in Tableaux," "Stories of Japanese Heroines," "Buddha's Crystal" (in 1908), and "Japanese Girls' Home Accomplishments" (in 1909).

HACHIRO TAMETOMO, THE ARCHER

第一

HACHIRO TAMETOMO, THE ARCHER

LONG, long ago there lived in Japan a man named Hachiro Tametomo, who became famous as the most skilful archer in the whole of the realm at that time. *Hachiro* means "the eighth," and he was so called because he was the eighth son of his father, General Tameyoshi of the house of Minamoto. Yoshitomo, who afterwards became such a great figure in Japanese history, was his elder brother. Tametomo was therefore uncle to the Shogun Yoritomo and the hero Yoshitsune, of whom you will soon read. He belonged to an illustrious family indeed.

As a child Hachiro gave promise of being a very strong man, and as he grew older this promise was more than fulfilled. He early showed a love of archery, and his left arm being four inches longer than his right, there was no one who could bend the bow better or send the arrow farther than he could. By nature Hachiro was a rough, wild boy who did not know what fear was, and he loved to challenge his elder brothers to fight. He ever

grew wilder as he grew older, till at last he acted so rudely and wilfully, respecting and obeying no one set over him, that even his own father found him unmanageable.

Now it happened when Hachiro was thirteen years old that a learned man, named Fujiwara-no-Shinsei, came to the Palace of the Emperor one day to give a lecture on a certain book. During the lecture he said that there could not be found in the whole of Japan a warrior whose skill in archery could match that of Kiyomori, the chief of the Taira clan, or of Yorimasa, the Minamoto knight. These two knights, though belonging to two different clans, were the best archers throughout the land. Now Hachiro, when he heard these words, laughed aloud in scorn, and said, so that every one might hear him, that Fujiwara-no-Shinsei was right about Yorimasa, but to call their enemy, that coward of a Kiyomori, a clever archer, only showed what a foolish and ignorant man Fujiwara-no-Shinsei was.

This rude speech, so contrary to the rules of Japanese courtesy, which commands young people to maintain a respectful and humble silence in the presence of their elders, made Fujiwara very angry. When the lecture was finished, he therefore sent for Tametomo and rebuked him sternly for his behaviour, but the daring Tametomo, instead of being ashamed of his unmannerly conduct

and prostrating himself in apology before the learned man, would not listen to anything he had to say, and was so boisterous in declaring that he was right that Fujiwara gave up his task of correction as a hopeless one.

But the lad's father, Tameyoshi, when he heard of what had happened, was very angry with his son for daring to dispute with his elder and superior, especially in the sacred precincts of the Palace. He was so wroth indeed that at last he refused to see him or to keep him any longer under his roof, and to punish him he sent him far away from his home to the island of Kiushiu.

Now Tametomo, like the wilful, headstrong boy that he was, did not mind his banishment at all; on the contrary, he felt like a hound let loose from the leash, and rejoiced in his liberty, even though he had incurred his father's displeasure.

When he reached the island of Kiushiu he made his way to the province of Higo, and finally settled down in the plain of Kumamoto. Now that Tametomo found himself free to do just as he liked, his thirst for conflict became so great that he could not restrain himself. He gathered round him a band of fighters as wild as himself and challenged the men in all the neighbouring provinces to come out and match their strength against his. In twenty battles which followed this challenge Tametomo was never once defeated, so great was

his strength, and his cleverness in directing his soldiers. He was like a silkworm eating up the mulberry tree. Just as the silkworm devours one leaf after another, with slow but sure relentlessness, so Tametomo fought and fought the inhabitants of the provinces round about till he had brought them all into subjection under him. By the time he was eighteen years old he had made himself chief of a large band of outlaws, distinguished for their reckless bravery, and with them he had mastered the whole of Kiushiu, the western part of Japan. It was now that the name of Chinsei was given him on account of his having conquered the West. *Chin* means "to put down," and *sei* means the "West."

Tidings travelled slowly in those days, for there were no railways or telegraph wires forming a network of lightning speed communication across the land, and all carrying of news was done on foot by messengers; so it was a long time before the Government at the capital heard of the wild and lawless doings of Chinsei Hachiro Tametomo, but at last his daring exploits became known, and the Government decided to interfere and to put a stop to his outlawry. They sent a regiment of soldiers to hunt him down and take him prisoner, but Tametomo and his band were not only strong and fearless, but sharp of wit, and in the frequent skirmishes that took place they always came out

victorious. At last the soldiers gave up their task of capturing him, for they found it impossible to overcome him and nothing would make Tametomo surrender. So the general returned to the capital and confessed that his expedition had failed. The Government now decided to arrest the outlaw's father, Tameyoshi, and so try to bring the rebel to bay. Tameyoshi was therefore seized and punished for being the parent of such an incorrigible rebel.

Now even the wilful Tametomo was moved and distressed when he heard of what had happened to his father, because of him. Although he was undisciplined by nature, and ever ready to rebel against all authority, yet hidden deep in his heart there was still a sense of duty to his father, and on this his enemies had counted. He knew that it was inexcusable to let his father suffer punishment for his misdoings. As soon as the bad tidings reached him, he gave up without the least hesitation all the land in Kiushiu, which had cost him several years of hard fighting to wrest from the inhabitants, and taking with him only ten of his men, with all the speed he could make, he went up to the capital.

As soon as he reached the city he sent in a document signed and sealed in his blood, asking pardon of the Government for all his former offences, and begging that his father might be re-

leased at once. He then waited calmly and quietly for his sentence of punishment to be declared.

Now when those in authority saw his filial piety and his good conduct at this crisis, they could not find it in their hearts to treat him with severity.

"Even this man who has behaved like a demon can feel so much for his father," they exclaimed; and merely rebuking him for his lawlessness they handed him over to his father, whom they had set free.

At this time civil war broke out in the land, for two brothers, sons of the late ex-Emperor Toba, aspired to sit on the Imperial throne. Owing to the favouritism of their father the elder brother, Sutoku, was forced to abdicate and retire, while Go-Shirakawa, the younger brother, was put on the throne. On his deathbed the ex-Emperor Toba (also called the Pontiff-Emperor) had foreseen that there would be strife between the two, and left sealed instructions in case of emergency. On opening this document it was found to contain a command to all the principal generals to support Go-Shirakawa.

Hence the great chief of the Taira, Kiyomori, and Tametomo's eldest brother, Yoshitomo, — indeed all the warriors of repute and strength, — supported Go-Shirakawa, while such nobles as Yorinaga and Fujiwara-no-Shinsei, who knew nothing of fighting, sided with the retired Emperor

Sutoku. Yorinaga, it is said, could not mount his horse. Indeed the only efficient soldiers on Sutoku's side were Tameyoshi and his seven younger sons, Tametomo, the reformed rebel, amongst them. Sutoku was told of Tametomo's strength and wonderful skill as an archer, and was advised to make use of him, so Tametomo was summoned ere long to the ex-Emperor's presence.

Tametomo was now just twenty years of age; he was more than seven feet in height; his eyes were sharp and piercing like those of a hawk, and he carried himself with great pride and noble bearing. As he entered the Imperial Audience Hall, so strong and brave and such a fine soldier did he look, that Sutoku at once felt confidence in him, and without delay consulted the young knight about the impending war.

Then Tametomo told the Emperor of how, when he had been banished to the West by his father, he had lived the life of an outlaw for many years — all that time his hand had been raised against every one, and every one had fought against him. It had been his delight and pastime to fight all who opposed his being lord of Kiushiu. He and his band had always conquered, he said, because they had always fought at night. It would be a good plan, he thought, for Sutoku and his men to attack the Palace of Go-Shirakawa by night, to set fire to the Palace on three sides and to place soldiers on

the fourth side to seize the new Emperor and his party when they tried to escape. If the ex-Emperor would follow his advice, Tametomo said he felt sure that he would win the victory.

Yorinaga, who was attending the Council when he heard Tametomo's plan, shook his head in disapproval, and said that Tametomo's scheme of attack was an inferior one; that in his opinion it was a coward's trick to attack by night; and that it was more befitting brave soldiers to fight by day in the ordinary way. When Tametomo saw that his advice was overruled and that Sutoku's Council would not follow his tactics, he left the Palace.

When he reached home he told his men of all that had passed, and added in his anger that Yorinaga was a conceited fellow who knew nothing of fighting, though he had dared to give his worthless opinion and to contradict him, Tametomo, who had fought without once being beaten all his life long. Thus giving vent to his disappointment, Tametomo seated himself on the mats, and as his anger passed away, he added with a sigh: "I only fear that Sutoku will be defeated in the coming struggle!"

Had Tametomo's tactics been followed, Japanese history would certainly have been different, for Kiyomori and Yoshitomo won a victory by the very plan which Tametomo had advised Sutoku to follow.

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That night, without any warning, the enemy made an attack on the ex-Emperor's Palace.

The wary Tametomo, however, expected an assault and had stationed himself at the South Gate on guard. On seeing Kiyomori and his band approaching he exclaimed: "You feeble worms! I'll surprise you!" and taking his bow and arrow shot a *samurai* named Ito Roku through the breast. The arrow was shot with such skill and force that it went right through the soldier's body, and coming out through his back, pierced the sleeve of the armour of Ito Go, his younger brother, who was riding close behind him.

Ito Go, when he saw the precision and strength with which the arrow was shot, knew that they had to deal with no common foe, and in alarm carried the arrow to his general, Kiyomori, to show it to him. Kiyomori examined the arrow carefully and found that it was made from a strong bamboo of more than the usual thickness, and that the metal head was like a big chisel, a formidable weapon indeed! It was so large that it resembled a spear more than an arrow, and even the redoubtable Kiyomori trembled at the sight of it.

"This looks more like the arrow of a demon than of a man. Let us find another place of assault where our enemies are weaker and where the leaders are not such remarkable marksmen!" said he.

Kiyomori then retired from the attack on the South Gate.

When Yoshitomo (who was now supporting Kiyomori, though later on he left the Taira chief) heard of his brother Tametomo's doings, he said: "Tametomo may be a daredevil and boast of his skill as an archer, but he will surely not take up his bow and arrow against the person of his elder brother," and he took Kiyomori's place at the South Gate of the Palace which Tametomo was guarding.

Drawing near the great roofed gate, Yoshitomo called aloud to Tametomo and said: "Is that you, Tametomo, on guard there? What a wicked deed you commit to fight against your elder brother? Now quickly open the gate and let me in. Tametomo! Do you hear? I am Yoshitomo! Retire there!"

Tametomo laughed aloud at his elder brother's command and answered boldly: "If it is wrong for me to take up arms against you, my brother, are you not an undutiful son to take up arms against your father?" (Tameyoshi, his father, was fighting on the ex-Emperor's side.)

Yoshitomo had no words wherewith to answer his brother and was silent. Tametomo, with his archer's eye, saw what a good mark his brother made just outside the gate, and he was greatly tempted to shoot at him even for sport. But he

said that though war found them fighting on opposite sides, yet they were brothers, born of the same mother, and that it would be acting against his conscience to kill or hurt his own brother, for surely he would do so if he took aim seriously! He would however for the sake and love of sport continue to show Yoshitomo what a clever marksman he was. Taking good aim at Yoshitomo's helmet, Tametomo raised his bow and shot an arrow right into the middle of the star that topped it. The arrow pierced the star, came out the other side, and then cut through a wooden gate five or six inches in thickness.

Even Yoshitomo was astonished at the skill which his brother displayed by this feat of archery. He now led his soldiers forward to the attack.

But Sutoku's army was far outnumbered by the enemy, who swept down upon the Palace in overwhelming numbers, and though Tametomo fought bravely and with great skill, his strength and valour were of no avail against the great odds which assailed him. The enemy gained ground slowly, inch by inch, till at last the gates were battered down, and they ruthlessly entered the Palace. Calamity was added to calamity, the foe set fire to several parts of the building, and great confusion ensued.

The ex-Emperor, in making a vain attempt to escape with Yorinaga, was caught and taken pris-

oner. Seeing that for the present there was nothing to be done, Tametomo, with his father Tameyoshi and his other brothers, all loyal to Sutoku's cause, made good their escape and fled to the province of Omi.

Tameyoshi was an old man unable to endure the hardships of a hunted life, and he found that he could go no further; so he told his sons that, as the Emperor had been taken prisoner, and as there was no hope of raising Sutoku's flag again, at any rate for the present, it would be wiser for them all to return to the capital and surrender themselves to the conquerors—the Taira. They all agreed to this proposal except Tametomo, so Tameyoshi, the aged general, and the rest of his sons went back to Kyoto.

Now Tametomo was left behind, alone in his brave resolution to fight another battle for the ex-Emperor Sutoku. As soon as he had parted, sad and determined, from his father and brothers, he made his way towards the Eastern provinces. But unfortunately, as he was journeying, the wound he had received in the recent fight became so painful that he stopped at some springs along the route, with the hope that the healing waters, a panacea for so many ills in Japan, would heal his hurt. But while taking the cure, his enemies came upon him and made him prisoner and he was sent back a captive to the capital.

By the time Tametomo reached the city, his father and his brothers had been put to death, and he was soon told that he was to meet the same cruel fate. 第一

But courage always arouses chivalry in the hearts of friends and foes alike, and it seemed to Tametomo's enemies a pity to put such a brave man to death. In the whole land there was no man who could match him in bending the bow and sending the arrow home to its mark, so it was decided to spare his life at the last moment. But to prevent him from using his wonderful skill against them, his enemies cut the sinews of both his arms and sent him away to the island of Oshima off the coast of the province of Idzu to live. Lest he should escape on the way they bound him hand and foot and put him in a palanquin. He was surrounded by a guard of fifty men, and so big and heavy was he that twenty bearers were required to carry the palanquin.

In spite of all the misfortunes that had befallen him, he carried the same courage, the same stout merry heart, the same love of wildness with him, even into exile. As the twenty men carried him along in the palanquin, Tametomo just for fun would now and again put forth all his strength. So great was his weight then that the twenty bearers would stagger and fall to the ground. These feats of strength alarmed the escort of fifty

soldiers. They feared lest he should act more savagely and become unmanageable, past their power of control, so they treated him in much the same way as they would have treated a lion or a tiger. They tried not to anger him, but did their utmost to keep him in a good humour during the journey.

At last they reached the province of Idzu and the seashore from whence they had to cross over to the island. Here they hired a boat, and putting Tametomo safely on board they took him to his last destination and left him there.

Though Tametomo was banished to this island, yet once there his enemies left him free to do much as he liked. He was not treated as a common prisoner, but as a brave though vanquished foe. The simple islanders recognized in him a great man and behaved to him accordingly and listened to everything he chose to say. So he led an unmolested life, free from care, except the sorrow of being an exile — but his was a nature which took life as it came, without worrying about what he could not help.

Now one day Tametomo was standing on the beach gazing out to sea, thinking of the many adventures he had passed through and wondering if fate would ever bring any change in the quiet life he was leading, when he saw a sea-gull come flying over the water. At first Tametomo with his keen

eyes saw only a speck in the distance, but the speck grew larger and larger till at last the sea-bird appeared. Tametomo now guessed that there was an island lying in the direction from which the bird came. So he got into a boat and set out on a voyage of discovery.

As he expected, he came to an island, after sailing from sunrise to sundown. To his amazement he found the place inhabited by creatures very different from human beings. They had dark red faces, with shocks of bright red hair, the locks of which hung over their foreheads and eyes. They looked just like demons. A whole crowd of these alarming-looking creatures were standing on the beach when Tametomo landed. When they caught sight of him they talked and gesticulated wildly amongst themselves and with fierce looks they rushed towards him.

Tametomo saw at once that they meant him harm, but he was nothing daunted. He went up to a large pine tree that was growing near by, laid his hands on it, and uprooting it with as much ease as if it were a weed, he brandished it over his head and called aloud threateningly: "Come, you demons, fight if you will. I am Chinsei Hachiro Tametomo, the Archer of great Japan. If you will henceforth become my servants and look up to me as master in all things, it is well; otherwise I will beat you all to little pieces."

When the demons saw Tametomo's great strength and his fearlessness they trembled. They held a short parley amongst themselves, and then the demon chief stepped forward, followed by all his band. They came in front of Tametomo and prostrating themselves before him on the sand, they one and all surrendered. Tametomo with much pride took possession of this island of demons and made himself monarch of all he surveyed. Having subdued the demons he returned to Oshima with the news. Great was the praise and merit awarded him by all the islanders.

Another day, soon after this, Tametomo was walking along the sands of the seashore, when he saw coming towards him, floating nearer and nearer on the top of the waves, a little old man. Tametomo could hardly believe his sight; he had never seen anything so strange in his whole life; he rubbed his eyes, thinking he must be dreaming, and looked and looked again. There sure enough was a tiny man, no bigger than one foot five inches high, sitting gracefully on a round straw mat.

Filled with wonder, Tametomo walked to the edge of the sand, and as the little creature floated nearer on an incoming wave he said: "Who are you?"

"I am the microbe of small-pox," answered the stranger pigmy.

"And why, may I ask, do you come to this island?" inquired Tametomo.

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"I have never been here before, so I came partly for sight-seeing and partly with the desire to seize hold of the inhabitants—" answered the little creature.

Before he could finish his sentence Tametomo said angrily: "You spirit of hateful pestilence! Silence, I say! I am no other than Chinsei Hachiro Tametomo! Get out of my presence at once and take yourself far from this place, or I will make you repent the day you ever came here!"

As Tametomo spoke, the small-pox microbe shrank and shrank from the form of a tiny man one foot five inches high, till only something the size of a pea was left in the middle of the straw mat. As he dwindled and dwindled, the little creature said that he was sorry that he had intruded into the island, but he had not known that it was in Tametomo's possession; and he then floated away out to sea on his straw mat as quickly and mysteriously as he had come.

The island of Oshima has always been free from small-pox, and to this day the islanders ascribe the immunity they enjoy from the horrible pestilence to Tametomo, who drove away the microbe when the hateful creature would have landed there.

Now that Tametomo had subdued the demons on the neighbouring island and had driven away the spirit of small-pox from Oshima, he was looked upon as a king by the simple islanders. They rendered him every possible honour and bowed their heads in the dust before him whenever he went abroad.

At last this state of affairs was reported to the authorities in the capital. The Ministers of State decided that it was unsafe to allow this to go on. Such a popular and powerful hero was a menace to the Government. Tametomo, the Champion Archer, must be put down and without delay. Such was the decree. A messenger was then and there despatched with sealed orders to General Shigemitsu, in Idzu, to set sail with his men for Oshima and subdue Tametomo.

One day Tametomo was standing on the beach and watching with pleasure, as he often did, the ever-whispering sea laughing and sparkling in the sunshine, when he saw fifty war-junks coming towards the island. The soldiers standing on the fifty decks were all armed with swords and bows and arrows, and clad in armour from head to foot, and they were beating drums and singing martial songs. Tametomo smiled when he saw this fleet all mustered in martial array and sent against him, a single man, for he knew, somehow or other, what they had come for.

"Now," he said proudly to himself, "the opportunity is given me of trying my archer's skill once more." Seizing his bow, he pulled it to the shape of a full moon, and aiming it at the foremost ship, sent an arrow right into the prow. In an instant the boat was upset and the soldiers pitched into the sea.

Till that moment Tametomo had feared that his arm had lost its first great strength, since his enemies had cut the sinews; but on the contrary he now found that not only were his arms as strong as ever, but that they had even grown longer, and that he was able to pull his bow wider than before. He clapped his hands with joy at the discovery and called aloud: "This is a happy thing!"

But now Tametomo reflected that if he fought against those who had been sent by the Government to take him, he would only bring trouble on the people of the island, who had been so kind to him and who had sheltered him in his exile; he thought of how in their simple reverence for his great strength they had almost worshipped him as a deified hero and had looked up to him as their leader. No,— he would not, could not, bring war and trouble and certain punishment upon these good folk, so for their sake he decided not to fight more. He looked back with the keen flight of thought that comes to mortals in moments of great crises, and

he remembered how with special mercy his life had been spared when he was taken prisoner in the civil war. Since then he had enjoyed life for over ten years. As a strong, brave man he could not grudge losing it now. He had made himself owner of the islands and the people called him their king; he felt that there was no shame or regret in dying when he had reached the height of his glory. Therefore, with firm and quick decision he made up his mind to die. He withdrew at once from the beach and retired to his house, and here he committed suicide by *harakiri*, thus saving himself from all dishonour and the islanders from all trouble. He was only thirty-two years of age when he died. His death was greatly regretted by all who loved him. But his glory did not die with him. The people ever afterward honoured and reverenced him as a great hero.

Such is one story of the death of Tametomo, but legend has created another, still more interesting, about him. Instead of taking his own life, this tradition says that he escaped from Oshima and reached Sanuki. Here he visited the late Emperor's tomb and offered up prayers for the illustrious dead. He then, believing that his day of usefulness was over, prepared to kill himself; when suddenly, as in a dream, the Emperor, Yorinaga, his father, and all those royalists who had fought and died in the civil war, or had been taken prisoners

and killed by the victorious parties of the new Emperor, appeared to him in the clouds and with a warning gesture prevented him from committing the dread deed of *harakiri*. As Tametomo gazed wonderingly at the beautiful vision, the bamboo curtain which hung before the ex-Emperor's palanquin lifted, and as the sunshine and grace of His Majesty's smile fell upon the awe-stricken man, the sword dropped from his hand and the wish to die expired in his breast. He fell forward in humble prostration to the ground. When Tametomo lifted his head, the vision had vanished within the clouds; nothing remained to be seen of the royal array which had saved him from his self-imposed death.

This wonderful visitation changed Tametomo's mind. He gave up all idea of seeking death, and, leaving Sanuki, journeyed to Kiushiu, and took up his abode on Mount Kihara. Here he collected a band of followers, and with them embarked on board a ship with the intention of reaching the capital and once more striking a blow at the arrogant and usurping House of Taira. But misfortune followed him. He was overtaken by a storm, his ship was wrecked, his men lost, while he only narrowly escaped with his life to the island of Riukiu. Here he found the people in a state of great excitement, for a party of rebels had risen against the King, who was greatly oppressed by

them. Tametomo put himself at the head of the loyalists, rescued the King, who had been taken prisoner, subdued the rebels, and then restored peace to the disturbed land. For these meritorious services the King adopted him as his son, bestowed upon him the title of Prince, and married him to one of the royal Princesses. At last one day, when Tametomo had reached a good old age, happy in the life of peace and bliss with which his later years had been crowned, as he was walking along one of the spacious verandahs of the Palace, his attendants noticed a trail of cloud coming towards their master from the sky. As soon as the cloud touched Tametomo, he began to rise in the air before their astonished gaze. Lost in speechless amazement, they watched the hero mount higher and higher, till the clouds closed round him and hid him from their view. Such is the pretty legend of the earthly end of the brave archer Tametomo, one of the most interesting figures in Japanese history, who conquered the trials and misfortunes of his youth, and won through to bright days of prosperity. He left a son called Shun-Tenno, who became King of Riukiu in due time.

TAMETOMO BEGAN TO RISE IN THE AIR

GEN SANMI YORIMASA, THE KNIGHT

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GEN SANMI YORIMASA, THE KNIGHT

LONG, long ago in Japan there lived a brave knight named Gen Sanmi Yorimasa. Yorimasa was his own name, while *Gen* was the great clan to which he belonged, the *Genji*, or *Minamoto*, famous in history, and *Sanmi* showed that he was a knight of the Third Rank at Court, from the word *san*, which means "three."

Now Yorimasa is so celebrated a warrior that to this day his picture is painted on the kites which the little boys of Japan fly at the New Year, and if you visit the temple of the Goddess of Mercy, at Asakusa, in Tokyo, you will see his portrait even there. And at the Boys' Festival, on the fifth of the fifth month, when in every household where there are sons the favourite heroes of the land are set out in the alcove of honour of the guest-room, you will surely find amidst the martial show of toys the figure of an archer clothed from head to foot in gay armour, with a huge bow in his hand and a quiver full of arrows on his back. That is Yorimasa of brave and dear memory.

日本之武士

Yorimasa was the fifth descendant of the Great Knight Raiko, who killed the demons of Oyeyama about whom you will soon read. As a youth Yorimasa was noted for his valour and his skill in archery, and he was soon called to the Court and given the important post of Chief Guard of the Imperial Palace.

Now, though Yorimasa was a man of ability and the greatest archer of his time, and though he had done deeds of note which had brought him into prominence, yet for some unaccountable reason his rank at Court remained stationary, and he did not advance from the Fourth degree (*Shi-i*), which he had when he first entered the sacred precincts of the Palace. The humour of the situation caught Yorimasa's fancy, for he was very quick-witted, and one day, smiling to himself, he sat down at his writing-table and composed a poem lamenting his bad luck. From the earliest ages the Japanese have trained themselves, at the times when their feelings are stirred by some event which causes happiness or sorrow or disappointment, not to give way to their emotions, but to control their minds sufficiently to compose a poem on the subject.

Yorimasa's poem was of thirty-one syllables,[1]

[1] All Japanese poetry is regulated and counted by syllables, not by lines and feet, as with us. Many words have several meanings and the witty use of these punning facilities is greatly sought after.

and in five short lines he said gracefully that "one who has not the means of climbing upwards remains under the tree and passes his life in picking up beechnuts." Now in Japanese the word for beechnuts is *shi-i*, and this word also means the Fourth Rank at Court. So that the couplet was a pun on his not being promoted. Yorimasa read the poem laughingly to some of his friends, and they, admiring his wit, repeated it and talked about it till it became quite famous in the Palace, and at last reached the Emperor's ear. The sympathy of His Majesty was aroused, and soon after this Yorimasa was raised to the rank of the Third degree, *sanmi*, and by this title he has ever afterwards been known.

Now it happened that at this time the Emperor became ill and could not sleep at night. He complained of disturbance and a great sense of oppression from sunset to sunrise. His courtiers, full of anxiety, sat up to watch the night through, to see if they could discover the cause of the Emperor's agitation. Some kept vigil in and round the Imperial chamber, others on the wide-eaved verandahs, and some in the courtyard of the Palace. Then the watchers on the verandahs and in the courtyard noticed that as soon as the sun set a black cloud came from the eastern horizon of the capital, and travelling across the city finally rested on the roof of the Palace called the Purple Hall (*Shishinden*)

of the North Star, where the Emperor slept. As soon as this cloud alighted on the Palace, the Emperor's sleep became disturbed, as if by frightful nightmare. Those in attendance round the royal bed heard strange scratchings and noises on the roof as if some dreadful beast were there. These unusual sounds and the nightmare of the Imperial sleeper lasted till dawn, when it was noticed that the black cloud always withdrew.

Now in the Palace there was great commotion. The Minister of the Right and the Minister of the Left, whose duty it was to guard the Emperor from all harm, held long and anxious consultation as to what should be done. Every one in the Palace was of the opinion that the black cloud hid some monster which for some unknown cause haunted the Emperor. It was quite certain that unless the monster were killed, and that soon, the Emperor's life would be endangered, for he was growing weaker and thinner every day. The question was, who was brave enough to undertake the task? The Palace sentinels were already scared, so it was useless to expect help from them. The Ministers must seek for some brave *samurai* well known for his daring and his skill as an archer and put him on night-duty, charging him to kill the monster as soon as it should appear. The courtiers, one and all, said that Yorimasa was the man. An Imperial messenger was therefore at once sent to

the knight, with a letter telling him what was demanded of him.

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Yorimasa, when he read the letter, looked very grave, for he felt the responsibility of his new duty, which was different from all other work; for on him now depended the recovery of the Emperor, who was visibly growing worse and living through each day in terror of the nightmare which haunted him in the darkness.

Yorimasa was a man of great courage and resource, and lost not a moment in getting ready. He strung his best bow most carefully and placed his quiver in two steel-headed arrows. He then put on his armour, and over his armour he donned a hunting-dress, and to look more courtly he put on a ceremonial cap instead of a helmet. He chose his favourite retainer, the bravest and strongest of all his soldiers, to accompany him. Yorimasa now set out as calmly and quietly as if he were simply going to his every-day duty and nothing more. As soon as his arrival was made known, he was summoned to the presence of the Ministers of the Right and the Left and told of all that was happening at Court — how every night at the hour of sunset a black cloud was seen to issue from the east, approach the Palace, and finally cover the roof of the Purple Hall of the North Star where the Emperor always slept. Then the Ministers told the knight of the strange noises

that were heard on the roof, of the howlings and scratchings which lasted all night till the dawn broke. It behoved him, they said, to do his best to kill the monster, if such it was, for all the guards were now thoroughly frightened, and none of them dared attack it in hand-to-hand fight, and none had skill enough to hit it in the dark, though the Emperor's own body-guard of archers had tried again and again.

Yorimasa listened to the strange story gravely. He saw that the whole Palace was in a state of alarm and disturbance, but he did not lose heart. With the greatest self-possession he waited for the end of the day. As soon as the sun set, the night grew stormy ; the wind blew a hurricane, the lightning flashed, and the thunder roared. Nothing daunted by the fury of the elements, the brave archer waited and waited. It must have been near midnight when Yorimasa saw a thick black cloud sweep down and settle on the roof of the Palace. He bade his retainer be ready with sword and torch at any moment and to follow him closely. The black cloud moved along the ridge of the grey-tiled roof till it stopped at the northeast corner, just over the Imperial sleeping-chamber.

Yorimasa cautiously followed the movements of the cloud, his man just behind him. Straining his eyes, Yorimasa saw, during a vivid flash of lightning, the form of a large animal. Keeping his eyes

on the spot where he had seen the head, while the peals of thunder crashed like cannon above, in the darkness which followed he caught the glare first of one eye and then of the other as the creature moved along.

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"This must be the monster who disturbs the Emperor's rest!" said Yorimasa to himself.

With these words he fitted an arrow to the bow, and aiming to the left of where he saw the left eye glare he pulled his bow as round as the full moon and let fly. Yorimasa felt that his arrow had touched flesh. At the same moment there was a frightful howl and a heavy thud, and the writhing in agony of some animal on the ground, which showed that Yorimasa had done his work well.

Now Yorimasa's retainer rushed upon the monster; in one hand he held a blazing torch, in the other a short sword with which he stabbed the creature nine times and quickly despatched him. Then they both raised their voices and called to the sentinels and the courtiers to come and look. A strange sight was in store for them. Never had any of them seen anything like the monster that lay before them. The dreadful beast was as large as a horse; it had the head of an ape, the body and claws of a tiger, the tail of a serpent, the wings of a bird, and the scales of a dragon. They had heard and read of such creatures in some of the old books, but had always thought that such

stories were old women's fables, to be told and whispered by grey-haired dames round the *hibachi* (fire-brazier) to their wonder-struck grandchildren, but never to be entertained seriously by men of sense. For a few moments they were all struck dumb with astonishment; they gazed silently first at the strange and horrible beast before them, then at Yorimasa, the slayer of it. Exclamations of wonder burst from their lips. Then one and all turned to the brave archer and congratulated him on his wonderful feat, his courage and his marksmanship. It seemed as if they would never cease applauding him.

The animal was flayed and its skin was carried to the Emperor, who ordered it to be stored as a curiosity in the Imperial treasure-house. His Majesty was highly pleased. He sent for Yorimasa and bestowed on him a sword called *Shishi-Wo*, or the King of Lions. The time of the year was the beginning of the fifth month; the crescent moon hung like a silver bow in the twilight sky, and the cuckoo[1] was calling from the trees near by; so the Minister of the Left who handed the sword to Yorimasa improvised the first half of a stanza saying:

"O cuckoo of wonder, even your name
Climbs ever upward to the Heaven!"

Then Yorimasa, on his knees with uplifted

[1] The cuckoo in Japanese literature and fancy takes the same place as the nightingale in England.

hands and bowed head, received the sword, and as he did so he completed the short poem with these words:—

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"Not through thine own: but through the merit of a moon-shaped bow!"

The Minister used the cuckoo then calling in the trees as simile of the brave warrior whose fame was rising now at Court because of his brave deeds, and Yorimasa modestly answered that all was due not to his skill, but to his bow, which he likened to the crescent moon then reigning in the sky. Both turned to the scenery of the moment for inspiration — the Minister in expressing his praise and the warrior in receiving it with becoming humility and grace.

The Emperor also considered this a fitting occasion to give Yorimasa the Lady Ayame (Iris) for his wife, and about this incident there is a pretty story.

The Lady Ayame was the most lovely lady-in-waiting in the Palace, and as good as she was beautiful. Not only in beauty, but in mind and heart, was she superior to all the other ladies-in-waiting, and both the Emperor and Empress held her in high esteem. Many were the Court nobles who fell in love with her, but all in vain; there was not one, however great or rich or handsome, who could make her so much as grant him even a fleeting smile. Time after time these noble suitors

wrote her letters and poems, telling her of their hopeless love and beseeching her to send them but a single line in reply. But only her silence answered them. She remained obdurate to all entreaties.

One day Yorimasa, when on duty in the Palace, caught a passing glimpse of the Lady Ayame, and from that hour his heart knew no rest. He could not forget the witching grace nor the modest beauty of her lovely face; sleeping or waking the vision of his lady-love was always before his eyes, and it seemed to grow more vivid as the days went by. Time after time he wrote her letters and composed poems asking her to marry him, but the Lady Ayame treated Yorimasa as she treated all her other wooers — she vouchsafed him no reply. For three long years Yorimasa waited and hoped and despaired, and waited and hoped again, content if once in a way from a respectful distance he could catch a glimpse of her. In spite of long and cold discouragement he loved her perseveringly.

The Emperor had heard of the knight's constancy, and now sent for his favourite lady-in-waiting, thinking this the right time to reward Yorimasa's prowess and the Lady Ayame's merit, and to make them both happy.

As soon as Ayame appeared, His Majesty said: "Lady Ayame, is it true that you have received many letters from the knight Yorimasa? Is it so?"

At this the Lady Ayame blushed like a peach-blossom in the glow of dawn, and hesitating a moment she replied: "May it please the Son of Heaven to condescend to send for Yorimasa and ask him!"

His Majesty then commanded her to retire, and forthwith summoned Yorimasa to his presence.

It was the fifth of May, the Spring Festival, and Yorimasa came robed in gala attire. He presented himself below the dais on which the Emperor was seated and prostrated himself before the throne.

"Is it true," and the Emperor smiled as he spoke, "that you love the Lady Ayame?"

Yorimasa was bewildered by the suddenness of the question and knew not what to reply, for he knew it to be strictly forbidden by Court etiquette to write love-letters to any lady-in-waiting, and he had done this persistently.

Now the Emperor saw Yorimasa's confusion and felt sorry for him. A bright thought struck His Majesty. He would please and puzzle Yorimasa and have some fun at his expense at the same time as well. He whispered an order to the chief master of ceremony.

In a short time three ladies appeared, heralded by attendants. As they moved across the mats of the immense hall, Yorimasa saw that they were all dressed exactly alike, and that even their hair

was done in the same style, so that it would be impossible for any one who did not know them well to distinguish one from the other.

Who were they? Was the Lady Ayame one of them?

Like maidens of Heaven (*tennin*) did the three noble damsels appear and their robes were beautiful to behold. So alike were they, and their beauty so extraordinary, that Yorimasa compared them to plum-blossoms on a branch seen through a window.

"The Lady Ayame is here," said the Emperor. "Choose her from among three ladies and take her."

Yorimasa bowed to the ground. He was overcome with the graciousness and kindness of the Emperor. But the task laid upon him he felt to be too difficult. Being a military man and inferior in rank to the Court circle, Yorimasa had never had an opportunity of seeing any of the Court ladies face to face. All he had seen of the Lady Ayame was sometimes a glimpse of her from the courtyard, where he was stationed, as she passed along the corridors of the Palace. Once at a poetical party, to which he had been admitted as a great favour, he had seen her, at the further end of the hall, glide with trailing robes of ceremony into her place behind the silken screen which always hid the women from view at such gatherings. That

YORIMASA COULD NOT TELL WHICH WAS THE LADY AYAME

was all he had ever seen of her, so that now he could not distinguish her from the rest.

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The Emperor was pleased at the success of his pleasantry. He saw that Yorimasa was fairly perplexed, and that he was unable to pick out his lady-love from her companions.

"I am a soldier and no courtier," thought the knight, "I may not presume to lift my eyes to a lady *above the clouds*.[1] Nor can I be sure which is Ayame. Were I to make a mistake and choose the wrong lady, it would be a lifelong disgrace and disappointment to me!"

The perplexity in his mind at once rose to his lips in the form of a short poem, which he repeated:—

"In the rainy season when the waters overflow the banks of the lake, who can gather the Iris?"

Such is the meaning of the verse.

By the rainy season Yorimasa meant his three years of hopeless courting, during which his eyes had become dim with the tears of disappointment he had shed, so that he could no longer see clearly enough to discover which was the lady of his choice. In this way he excused himself for his seeming stupidity, and showed a modest reserve which pleased all present.

The aptness and quickness of Yorimasa's verse

[1] "Above the clouds"—a complimentary expression used for the exalted Court circle.

won the Emperor's admiration. The tears stood in the august eyes, for he thought of the great love wherewith Yorimasa had loved the Lady Iris, and of the sorrow and patience of his long wooing and waiting. His Majesty rose from his throne, descended the steps of the dais, and going up to Ayame took her by the hand and led her forth to Yorimasa.

"This is the Lady Ayame, I give her to you!" were the golden words of the Emperor.

To Yorimasa it must have seemed too wonderful almost to be true. The great desire of his life was given him by the Emperor himself!

Then Yorimasa led his beautiful lady-love away and married her, and we are told that they lived as happily as fish in water; and it seemed as if they had but one heart between them, so harmonious was their union. In the Palace there was great rejoicing over the auspicious event, and all the courtiers praised the merit of the verse which had finally given Ayame to Yorimasa and won the Emperor's special commendation. The happy couple received the congratulations of the Emperor and Empress, of the courtiers and many noble people, and wedding-presents innumerable. Surely at this time there was no one happier than Yorimasa in all the land.

There are many stories told of Yorimasa which show us that he was not only a brave soldier and a

man of learning and a poet, but also a man of wit and tact who knew how to use men as he willed.

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Now one day a band of discontented turbulent priests came to the Palace Gate where Yorimasa was on guard, and demanded entrance. It must be explained that in those days the Buddhist priests of Kyoto were a set of wild and lawless men who often brought shame to their religion by their wicked lives. They lived outside the city on Mount Hiei, which they made their stronghold, and, forgetting the dignity of their religion, they took sides in war and in politics. They gave trouble to those in authority, especially to those who did not favour them. They used the smallest event as an occasion for carrying swords and bows and arrows, and it was their habit to go out equipped like soldiers going forth to war.

Yorimasa saw that the priests were all well armed, and only too anxious to find a pretext for drawing their swords. They carried with them in great state the sacred palanquin of their temple. In this palanquin their patron god was supposed to dwell, and it was borne aloft on the shoulders of fifty men. With loud shoutings and a wild display of strength the priests rushed the car along, now lifting it high above their heads, now staggering under its weight, as it seemed about to crush them to the ground.

Now Yorimasa was in no mood for fighting

that day, and it seemed to him not worth his while to set his men — the best fighters and archers in the realm — against a handful of priests whom he could disperse in a few minutes; besides, these priests from Mount Hiei were troublesome fellows and he did not wish to earn their enmity. So laughing quietly to himself he said that he would have some fun at their expense.

When the procession stopped opposite the gate, Yorimasa with his captains of the guard sallied forth to meet the noisy crowd, and coming in front of the palanquin bowed in reverence before it with slow ceremony.

The priests, who had expected and were prepared for a very difficult reception, were surprised and somewhat taken aback. After some parley amongst themselves, their spokesman advanced and asked leave to enter the gate, saying they had a petition to present to the Emperor.

Yorimasa sent his captain forward.

"My lord bids you welcome," he said, "and wishes me to say that he worships the same god as yourselves, and he is therefore averse to shooting against the *Mikoshi* [sacred palanquin] with his bows and arrows. Besides this, we are very few in number, so that your names will be dishonoured and you will be called cowards for having chosen the weakest post to fight. Now the next gate is guarded by the Heike soldiers, who are

much stronger in numbers than we are. How would it do for you to go round and fight there? You would surely gain glory in an encounter with them."

The priests were so pleased by the flattery of this speech that they did not see that it was a ruse on the part of Yorimasa to get rid of them easily, and that he was sending them round to bother his rivals. He had also appealed to their best feelings, for Japanese chivalry teaches that in the event of choosing between two enemies the weaker must always be spared.

Some polite answer was made to Yorimasa, and then the priests shouldered the *Mikoshi* and departed in the same spirited and vociferous manner that they had come. They went to the next gate, guarded by the Heike. Battle was given at once, for they were refused admittance. The priests were beaten and fled for their lives to the hills.

All these stories show us that Yorimasa was a clever man in every way, but in the end he was unfortunate, and for this there was no help.

When we read the story of his ill-fated death our hearts are filled with sorrow for him. It is not always as one wishes in this world, and Yorimasa did not meet with the fate his meritorious deeds and character deserved.

The Heike or Taira clan were now in the ascendant (Yorimasa, it will be remembered, be-

longed to the Genji or Minamoto), and Kiyomori, their despotic and unprincipled leader, was Prime Minister. All the important posts in the Government he gave to his sons, grandsons, and relations, who under these circumstances, seeing that they owed everything to him, did just as the tyrant ordered. All *samurai* who did not belong to the Heike clan he treated unjustly, even throwing those he did not like into prison, whether they were innocent or guilty of the crimes or behaviour deserving such punishment.

As a general of the rival Genji clan, Yorimasa suffered much from this unfair treatment. As he watched the arrogant conduct of Kiyomori and his son Munemori, he longed to be able to punish them and to bring retribution on the whole clan, and to this end he thought and worked and planned.

At last the Heike became so overbearing and so powerful that their actions passed the bounds of all reason, and Kiyomori, on a question of succession to the throne, confined the reigning Emperor in his Palace.

This last step was too much for Yorimasa; he could endure this state of things no longer, and he resolved to make a bold strike for the right. He placed Prince Takakura, the son of the late Emperor, at the head of his army and set out to do battle with the Heike.

But the Genji were far inferior in numbers to

the Heike, and, sad to relate, Yorimasa was defeated in his good and just cause. With the remainder of his army he fled before the enemy and took refuge in the Temple of Byodoin, situated on the river Uji.

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The Byodoin Temple, a large edifice near Kyoto, remains to this day. Here Yorimasa made a last stand to afford time for Prince Takakura to escape. He divided his men into two parties — one division he stationed as a reserve force in the grounds of the temple, while the other he drew up in battle array along the banks of the river. In case of pursuit, to prevent the enemy from crossing the river, they tore up the planks which formed the flooring of the bridge, so that only a skeleton of posts and cross-beams remained. Then they rested and waited to see what would happen.

The Heike soon came in sight following hard after them. First came the generals, then the soldiers, twenty-eight thousand strong. They approached the bridge, but stopped short when they saw what the Genji had cleverly done. In a few minutes they ranged themselves along the bank facing the enemy.

Both armies now stood confronting each other on either side of the Uji. Simultaneously the order was given to fight by both the Genji and the Heike generals and a fierce discharge of arrows from both sides ensued.

Then there rushed forth from the ranks of the Genji a huge priest, Tajima Bo by name (in those days the Buddhist priests often took part in battles); brandishing an enormous halberd he dashed out alone on the skeleton bridge. The Heike, thinking that he made an excellent target, shot a shower of arrows at him, but he was not in the least daunted. When the arrows were aimed at his head, he stooped and they passed over him ; when they were aimed at his legs, he jumped high in the air and they flew under him ; when they were aimed at his body, he swept them aside with his halberd ; and in this way he escaped free from hurt. So quick was he in his movements, and so marvellous was the way in which he balanced himself in his progress across the bridge, that he seemed to be endowed with power more than human ; and not only his own comrades but the enemy also looked at him in breathless admiration.

Then another of Yorimasa's men, also a priest, Jomyo by name, inspired by this example, came forth and stood up at the end of the bridge, and fitting his arrows to the bow, in rapid succession shot about a dozen of the foe, in the twinkling of an eye.

Crying out, "Oh, this is too much trouble ! " he threw away his bow and arrow, and walked over the bridge on another beam, sweeping aside with his sword the arrows aimed at him.

Yet another priest, famous for his great strength, dashed out and followed after his friends across the bridge. He soon came up with Jomyo, but as the beams of the bridge were narrow he could not pass him. Stopping for a moment to think what he should do, he stretched out his hands and touched the helmet of the man just in front of him, then lightly and quickly jumped leap-frog over his head. The bridge was now soon swarming with the Genji, who with fierce battle-cries began to attack the Heike, whose advance was entirely checked. For some minutes the Heike were greatly put out, not knowing what to do.

Then one brave youth, seeing how matters stood, and that it required some one to take a dauntless lead, sprang forth in front of the Heike and called out: "Now that it comes to this, there is no other way!" and with these words he dashed his horse into the river. It was the rainy season, and the waters were higher and the current stronger than usual. Black with mud the river ran swirling and whirling on its course.

Never was there a braver sight than when the young soldier drove his horse into the swollen river and made for the other side. His comrades could not stand still and watch him; fired by his courage, numbers of the Heike, shouting "I also! I also!" dashed in after him. In a few minutes, while the Genji looked on in surprise, three hun-

dred men had followed the gallant young captain, stemmed and crossed the torrent, and landed on the other side; and with the same dashing spirit, carrying everything before them, they broke through the last lines of the Genji and entered the Byodoin Temple, where their last stand was made. The Genji, with Yorimasa at their head, were now in a desperate condition. Seeing his father hard-pressed, Kanetsuna, Yorimasa's second son, an intrepid young knight, rushed into the thickest of the fight and tried to defend his father. A Heike captain coming up with fifteen of his men seized Kanetsuna, overpowered him, and cut off his head.

Not one of Yorimasa's little band turned to flee. Although they knew there was no hope, they fought on face to face with the foe, for *samurai* traditions held it a disgrace to be even wounded in the back. One famous general in ancient history issued an order to the effect that prizes would be awarded to those who were shot in the forehead, but those who were wounded in the back should be slain.

One by one, the Genji fell, slain either by sword or arrow. Yorimasa received several wounds. Then he saw that there was no use in fighting more; all was lost. Those of the Genji who were still left made a brave stand round their chief; while they kept the enemy at bay Yorimasa slipped away and

hastened to Prince Takakura, in the temple, and begged him to flee in safety while there was yet time.

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Having seen his Imperial master safe, Yorimasa then retired to an inner part of the garden, and sitting under a large tree drew out his sword and prepared himself to commit *harakiri*, for *samurai* honour would not let him survive defeat. Calling his retainer Watanabe, who had escaped unhurt and who never left his master's side, Yorimasa bade him act as second in the rite. Then quietly taking off his armour, he composed a poem. He likened himself to a fossil tree that never knows the joy of blossoming, for he had never attained his ambition (the destruction of his enemies), "and sad indeed is the end of my life," the last line of the verse, were the last words he uttered.

He took out his short sword, and thrusting it into his side died like a brave and gallant *samurai*, without a moan. Then from behind, as was his duty as second, Watanabe cut off his master's head, and so that it should not be discovered by the enemy and carried away as a trophy of war, he tied a large stone to it, and with sorrowful reverence dropped it into the river and watched it sink beneath the water out of sight.

In this way died Yorimasa; those of his followers who were not killed by the enemy died by their own hand, and Prince Takakura, fleeing to Nara,

was overtaken by the Heike and put to death on the way.

Yorimasa was seventy-five years of age when he died. Though, as he lamented in his last poem, he had not achieved his ambition in punishing the Heike, yet years later his work was carried on, and the Heike were completely exterminated by Yoritomo, the great chief and mighty avenger of the Genji; and the name of Gen Sanmi Yorimasa lives forever in the history of his country.

THE STORY OF YOSHITSUNE

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THE STORY OF YOSHITSUNE

IN old Japan more than seven hundred years ago a fierce war was raging between the two great clans, the Taira and the Minamoto, also called the Heike and the Genji. These two famous clans were always contesting together for political power and military supremacy, and the country was torn in two with the many bitter battles that were fought. Indeed it may be said that the history of Japan for many years was the history of these two mighty martial families; sometimes the Minamoto and sometimes the Taira gaining the victory, or being beaten, as the case might be; but their swords knew no rest for a period of many years. At last a strong and valiant general arose in the House of Minamoto. His name was Yoshitomo. At this time there were two aspirants for the Imperial throne and civil war was raging in the capital. One Imperial candidate was supported by the Taira, the other by the Minamoto. Yoshitomo, though a Minamoto, sided at first with the Taira against the reigning Emperor; but when he saw how cruel and relentless their chief, Kiyomori,

was, he turned against him and called all his followers to rally round the Minamoto standard and fight to put down the Taira.

But fate was against the gallant and doughty warrior Yoshitomo, and he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Taira. He and his men, while fleeing from the vigilance of their enemies, were overtaken within the city gates, and ruthlessly slaughtered by Kiyomori and his soldiers.

Yoshitomo left behind him his beautiful young wife, Tokiwa Gozen, and eight children, to mourn his untimely death. Five of the elder children were by a first wife. The third of these became Yoritomo, the great first Shogun of Japan, while the eighth and youngest child was Ushiwaka, about whom this story is written. Ushiwaka and the hero Yoshitsune were one and the same person. Ushiwaka (Young Ox — he was so called because of his wonderful strength) was his name as a boy, and Yoshitsune was the name he took when he became of age.

At the time of his father's death, Ushiwaka was a babe in the arms of his mother, Tokiwa Gozen, but his tender age would not have saved his life had he been found by his father's enemies.

After the defeat they had inflicted on the rival clan, the Taira were all-powerful for a time. The Minamoto clan were in dire straits and in danger of being exterminated now, for so fierce was Kiyo-

mori's hatred against his enemies that when a Minamoto fell into his cruel hands he immediately put the captive to death.

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Realizing the great peril of the situation, Tokiwa Gozen, the widow of Yoshitomo, full of fear and anxiety for the safety of her little ones, quietly hid herself in the country, taking with her Ushiwaka and her two other children. So successful was Tokiwa Gozen in concealing her hiding-place that, though the Taira clan either killed or banished to a far-away island all the elder sons, relations, and partisans of the Minamoto chief, they could not discover the whereabouts of the mother and her children, notwithstanding the strict search Kiyomori had made.

Determined to have his will, and angry at being thwarted by a woman, Kiyomori at last hit on a plan which he felt sure would not fail to draw the wife of Yoshitomo from her hiding-place. He gave orders that Sekiya, the mother of the fair Tokiwa, should be seized and brought before him. He told her sternly that if she would reveal her daughter's hiding-place she should be well treated, but if she refused to do as she was told she would be tortured and put to death. When the old lady declared that she did not know where Tokiwa was, as in truth she did not, Kiyomori thrust her into prison and had her treated cruelly day after day.

Now the reason why Kiyomori was so set on

finding Tokiwa and her sons was that while Yoshitomo's heirs lived he and his family could know no safety, for the strongest moral law in every Japanese heart was the old command, "A man may not live under the same heaven with the murderer of his father," and the Japanese warrior recked nothing of life or death, of home or love in obeying this — as he deemed — supreme commandment. Women too burned with the same zeal in avenging the wrongs of their fathers and husbands.

Tokiwa Gozen, though hiding in the country, heard of what had befallen her mother, and great was her sorrow and distress. She sat down on the mats and moaned aloud: "It is wrong of me to let my poor innocent mother suffer to save myself and my children, but if I give myself up, Kiyomori will surely take my lord's sons and kill them.— What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do?"

Poor Tokiwa! Her heart was torn between her love for her mother and her love for her children. Her anxiety and distraction were pitiful to see. Finally she decided that it was impossible for her to remain still and silent under the circumstances; she could not endure the thought that her mother was suffering persecution while she had the power of preventing it, so holding the infant Ushiwaka in her bosom under her kimono, she took his two elder brothers (one seven and the other five years of age) by the hand and started for the capital.

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There were no trains in those days and all travelling by ordinary people had to be done on foot. *Daimios* and great and important personages were carried in palanquins, and they only could travel in comfort and in state. Tokiwa could not hope to meet with kindness or hospitality on the way, for she was a Minamoto, and the Taira being all-powerful it was death to any one to harbour a Minamoto fugitive. So the obstacles that beset Tokiwa were great; but she was a *samurai* woman, and she quailed not at duty, however hard or stern that duty was. The greater the difficulties, the higher her courage rose to meet them. At last she set out on her momentous and celebrated journey.

It was winter-time and snow lay on the ground, and the wind blew piercingly cold and the roads were bad. What Tokiwa, a delicately nurtured woman, suffered from cold and fatigue, from loneliness and fear, from anxiety for her little children, from dread lest she should reach the capital too late to save her old mother, who might die under the cruel treatment to which she was being subjected, or be put to death by Kiyomori, in his wrath, or finally lest she herself should be seized by the Taira, and her filial plan be frustrated before she could reach the capital—all this must have been greater than any words can tell.

Sometimes poor distressed Tokiwa sat down by the wayside to hush the wailing babe she carried in

her bosom, or to rest the two little boys, who, tired and faint and famished, clung to her robes, crying for their usual rice. On and on she went, soothing and consoling them as best she could, till at last she reached Kyoto, weary, footsore, and almost heart-broken. But though she was well-nigh overcome with physical exhaustion, yet her purpose never flagged. She went at once to the enemy's camp and asked to be admitted to the presence of General Kiyomori.

When she was shown into the dread man's presence, she prostrated herself at his feet and said that she had come to give herself up and to release her mother.

"I am Tokiwa—the widow of Yoshitomo. I have come with my three children to beseech you to spare my mother's life and to set her free. My poor old mother has done nothing wrong. I am guilty of hiding myself and the little ones, yet I pray humbly for your august forgiveness."

She pleaded in such an agonizing way that Kiyomori, the Taira chieftain, was struck with admiration for her filial piety, a virtue more highly esteemed than any other in Japan. He felt sincerely sorry for Tokiwa in her woe, and her beauty and her tears melted his hard heart, and he promised her that if she would become his wife he would spare not only her mother's life, but her three children also.

For the sake of saving her children's lives the sad-hearted woman consented to Kiyomori's proposal. It must have been terrible to her to wed with her lord's enemy, the very man who had caused his death; but the thought that by so doing she saved the lives of his sons, who would one day surely arise to avenge their father's cruel death, must have been her consolation and her recompense for the sacrifice.

Kiyomori showed himself kinder to Tokiwa than he had ever shown himself to any one, for he allowed her to keep the babe Ushiwaka by her side. The two elder boys he sent to a temple to be trained as acolytes under the tutelage of priests.

By placing them out of the world in the seclusion of priesthood, Kiyomori felt that he would have little to fear from them when they attained manhood. How terribly and bitterly he was mistaken we learn from history, for two of Yoshitomo's sons, banished though they had been for years and years, arose like a rushing, mighty whirlwind from the obscurity of the monastery to avenge their father, and they wiped the Taira from off the face of the earth.

Time passed by, and when the little babe Ushiwaka at last reached the age of seven, Kiyomori likewise took him from his mother and sent him to the priests. The sorrow of Tokiwa, bereft of the last child of her beloved lord Yoshitomo, can better be imagined than described. But in her

golden captivity even Kiyomori had not been able to deprive her of one iota of the incomparable power of motherhood, that of influencing the life of her child to the end of his days. As the little fellow had lain in her arms night and day, as she crooned him to sleep and taught him to walk, she forever whispered the name of Minamoto Yoshitomo in his ear.

At last one day her patience was rewarded and Ushiwaka lisped his father's name correctly. Then Tokiwa clasped him proudly to her breast, and wept tears of thankfulness and joy and of sorrowing remembrance, for she could never even for a day banish Yoshitomo from her mind. As Ushiwaka grew older and could understand better what she said, Tokiwa would daily whisper, "Remember thy father, Minamoto Yoshitomo! Grow strong and avenge his death, for he died at the hands of the Taira!" And day by day she told him stories of his great and good father — of his martial prowess in battle, and of his great strength and wonderful wielding of the sword, and she bade her little son remember and be like his father. And the mother's words and tears, sown in long years of patience and bitter endurance, bore fruit beyond all she had ever hoped or dreamed.

So Ushiwaka was taken from his mother at the age of seven, and was sent to the Tokobo Monastery, at Kuramayama, to be trained as a monk.

Even at that early age he showed great intelligence, read the Sacred Books with avidity, and surprised the priests by his diligence and quickness of memory. He was naturally a very high-spirited youth, and could brook no control and hated to yield to others in anything whatsoever. As the years passed by and he grew older, he came to hear from his teachers and school friends of how his father Yoshitomo and his clan the Minamoto had been overthrown by the Taira, and this filled him with such intense sorrow and bitterness that sleeping or waking he could never banish the subject from his mind. As he listened daily to these things the words of his mother, which she had whispered in his ear as a child, now came throbbing back to his mind, and he understood their full meaning for the first time. In the lonely nights he felt again her hot tears falling on his face, and heard her repeat as clearly as a bell in the silence of the darkness: "Remember thy father, Minamoto Yoshitomo! Avenge his death, for he died at the hands of the Taira!"

At last one night the lad dreamed that his mother, beautiful and sad as he remembered her in the days of his childhood, came to his bedside and said to him, while the tears streamed down her face: "Avenge thy father, Yoshitomo! Unless thou remember my last words, I cannot rest in my grave. I am dying, Ushiwaka, remember!"

And Ushiwaka awoke as he cried aloud in his agony: "I will! Honourable mother, I will!"

From that night his heart burned within him and the fire and love of clan-race stirred his soul. Continual brooding over the wrongs of his clan generated in his heart a fierce desire for revenge, and he finally resolved to abandon the priesthood, become a great general like his father, and punish the Taira. And as his ambition was fired and exalted and his mind thrilled back to the days when his poor unhappy mother Tokiwa prayed and wept over him, daily whispering in his ear the name of his father, his will grew to purpose strong. Tokiwa had not suffered in vain. From this time on, Ushiwaka bided his time every night till all in the temple were fast asleep. When he heard the priests snoring, and knew himself safe from observation, he would steal out from the temple, and, making his way down the hillside into the valley, he would draw his wooden sword and practise fencing by himself, and, striking the trees and the stones imagine that they were his Taira foes. As he worked in this way night after night, he felt his muscles grow strong, and this practice taught him how to wield his sword with skill.

One night as usual Ushiwaka had gone out to the valley and was diligently brandishing about his wooden sword. His mind fully bent upon his self-taught lesson, he was marching up and down,

chanting snatches of war-songs and striking the trees and the rocks, when suddenly a great cloud spread over the heavens, the rain fell, the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, and a great noise went through the valley, as if all the trees were being torn up by the roots and their trunks were splitting.

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While Ushiwaka wondered what this could mean, a great giant over ten feet in height stood before him. He had large round glaring eyes that glinted like metal mirrors; his nose was bright red, and it must have been about a foot long; his hands were like the claws of a bird, and to each there were only two fingers. The feathers of long wings at each side peeped from under the creature's robes, and he looked like a gigantic goblin. Fearful indeed was this apparition. But Ushiwaka was a brave and spirited youth and the son of a soldier, and he was not to be daunted by anything. Without moving a muscle of his face he gripped his sword more tightly and simply asked: "Who are you, sirrah?"

The goblin laughed aloud and said: "I am the King of the Tengu,[1] the elves of the mountains, and I have made this valley my home for many a long year. I have admired your perseverance in coming to this place night after night for the pur-

[1] The Tengu are strange creatures with very long noses; sometimes they have the head of a hawk and the body of a man.

pose of practising fencing all by yourself, and I have come to meet you, with the intention of teaching you all I know of the art of the sword."

Ushiwaka was delighted when he heard this, for the Tengu have supernatural powers, and fortunate indeed are those whom they favour. He thanked the giant elf and expressed his readiness to begin at once. He then whirled up his sword and began to attack the Tengu, but the elf shifted his position with the quickness of lightning, and taking from his belt a fan made of seven feathers parried the showering blows right and left so cleverly that the young knight's interest became thoroughly aroused. Every night he came out for the lesson. He never missed once, summer or winter, and in this way he learned all the secrets of the art which the Tengu could teach him.

The Tengu was a great master and Ushiwaka an apt pupil. He became so proficient in fencing that he could overcome ten or twenty small Tengu in the twinkling of an eye, and he acquired extraordinary skill and dexterity in the use of the sword; and the Tengu also imparted to him the wonderful adroitness and agility which made him so famous in after-life.

Now Ushiwaka was about fifteen years old, a comely youth, and tall for his age. At this time there lived on Mount Hiei, just outside the capital, a wild bonze named Musashi Bo Benkei, who

COULD OVERCOME TEN OR TWENTY SMALL TENGU IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

was such a lawless and turbulent fellow that he had become notorious for his deeds of violence. The city rang with the stories of his misdeeds, and so well known had he become that people could not hear his name without fear and trembling.

Benkei suddenly made up his mind that it would be good sport to steal a thousand swords from various knights.

No sooner did the wild idea enter his head than he began to put it into practice. Every night he sauntered forth to the Gojo Bridge of Kyoto, and when a knight or any man carrying a sword passed by, Benkei would snatch the weapon from his girdle. If the owners yielded up their blades quietly, Benkei allowed them to pass unhurt, but if not, he would strike them dead with a single blow of the huge halberd he carried. So great was Benkei's strength that he always overcame his victim, — resistance was useless, — and night by night one and sometimes two men met death at his hands on the Gojo Bridge. In this way Benkei gained such a terrible reputation that everybody far and near feared to meet him, and after dark no one dared to pass near the bridge he was known to haunt, so fearful were the tales told of the dreaded robber of swords.

At last this story reached the ears of Ushiwaka, and he said to himself: "What an interesting man this must be! If it is true that he is a bonze, he

must be a strange one indeed; but as he only robs people of their swords, he cannot be a common highwayman. If I could make such a strong man a retainer of mine, he would be of great assistance to me when I punish my enemies, the Taira clan. Good! To-night I will go to the Gojo Bridge and try the mettle of this Benkei!"

Ushiwaka, being a youth of great courage, had no sooner made up his mind to meet Benkei than he proceeded to put his plan into execution. He started out that same evening. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and taking with him his favourite flute he strolled forth through the streets of the sleeping city till he came to the Gojo Bridge. Then from the opposite direction came a tall figure which appeared to touch the clouds, so gigantic was its stature. The stranger was clad in a suit of coal-black armour and carried an immense halberd.

"This must be the sword-robber! He is indeed strong!" said Ushiwaka to himself, but he was not in the least daunted, and went on playing his flute quite calmly.

Presently the armed giant halted and gazed at Ushiwaka, but evidently thought him a mere youth, and decided to let him go unmolested, for he was about to pass him by without lifting a hand. This indifference on the part of Benkei not only disappointed but angered Ushiwaka. Having waited in vain for the stranger to offer violence,

our hero approached Benkei, and, with the intention of picking a quarrel, suddenly kicked the latter's halberd out of his hand.

Benkei, who had first thought to spare Ushiwaka on account of his youth, became very angry when he found himself insulted by a lad to whom he had been intentionally kind. In a fury he exclaimed, "Miserable stripling!" and raising his halberd struck sideways at Ushiwaka, thinking to slice him in two at the waist and to see his body fall asunder. But the young knight nimbly avoided the blow which would have killed him, and springing back a few paces he flung his fan[1] at Benkei's head and uttered a loud cry of defiance. The fan struck Benkei on the forehead right between the eyes, making him mad with pain. In a transport of rage Benkei aimed a fearful blow at Ushiwaka, as if he were splitting a log of wood with an axe. This time Ushiwaka sprang up to the parapet of the bridge, clapped his hands, and laughed in derision, saying:

"Here I am! Don't you see? Here I am!" and Benkei was again thwarted thus.

Benkei, who had never known his strokes miss before, had now failed twice in catching this nimble opponent. Frantic with chagrin and baffled rage, he now rushed furiously to the attack, whirling his great halberd round in all directions till it looked

[1] The fighter's fan was always made of metal and was often used as a weapon.

like a water-wheel in motion, striking wildly and blindly at Ushiwaka. But the young knight had been taught tricks innumerable by the giant Tengu of Kuramayama, and he had profited so well by his lessons that the King Tengu had at last said that even he could teach him nothing more, and now, as it may well be imagined, he was too quick for the heavy Benkei. When Benkei struck in front, Ushiwaka was behind, and when Benkei aimed a blow behind, Ushiwaka darted in front. Nimble as a monkey and swift as a swallow, Ushiwaka avoided all the blows aimed at him, and, finding himself outmatched, even the redoubtable Benkei grew tired.

Ushiwaka saw that Benkei was played out. He kept up the game a little longer and then changed his tactics. Seizing his opportunity, he knocked Benkei's halberd out of his hand. When the giant stooped to pick his weapon up, Ushiwaka ran behind him and with a quick movement tripped him up. There lay the big man on all fours, while Ushiwaka nimbly strode across his back and pressing him down asked him how he liked this kind of play.

All this time Benkei had wondered at the courage of the youth in attacking and challenging a man so much larger than himself, but now he was filled with amazement at Ushiwaka's wonderful strength and adroitness.

"I am indeed astonished at what you have done," said Benkei. "Who in the world can you be? I have fought with many men on this bridge, but you are the first of my antagonists who has displayed such strength. Are you a god or a *tengu?* You certainly cannot be an ordinary human being!"

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Ushiwaka laughed and said: "Are you afraid for the first time, then?"

"I am," answered Benkei.

"Will you from henceforth be my retainer?" demanded Ushiwaka.

"I will in very truth be your retainer, but may I know who you are?" asked Benkei meekly.

Ushiwaka now felt sure that Benkei was in earnest. He therefore allowed him to get up from the ground, and then said: "I have nothing to hide from you. I am the youngest son of Minamoto Yoshitomo and my name is Ushiwaka."

Benkei started with surprise when he heard these words and said: "What is this I hear? Are you in truth a son of the Lord Yoshitomo of the Minamoto clan? That is the reason I felt from the first moment of our encounter that your deeds were not those of a common person. No wonder that I thought this! I am only too happy to become the retainer of such a distinguished and spirited young knight. I will follow you as my lord and master from this very moment, if you will allow me. I can wish for no greater honour."

So there and then, on the Gojo Bridge in the silver moonlight, the bonze Benkei vowed to be the true and faithful vassal of the young knight Ushiwaka and to serve him loyally till death, and thus was the compact between lord and vassal made. From that time on, Benkei gave up his wild and lawless ways and devoted his life to the service of Ushiwaka, who was highly pleased at having won such a strong liegeman to his side.

Although Ushiwaka had now secured Benkei, it was impossible for only two men, however strong, to think of fighting the Taira clan, so they both decided that the cherished plan must wait till the Minamoto were stronger. While thus waiting they heard a report to the effect that a descendant of Tawara Toda Hidesato [1] named Hidehira was now a famous general in Kaiwai of the Ashu Province, and that he was so powerful that no one dared oppose him. Hearing this, Ushiwaka thought that it would be a good plan to pay the general a visit and try to interest him, if possible, in the fortunes of the House of Minamoto. He consulted with Benkei, who encouraged the young knight in his scheme of enlisting the General Hidehira as a partisan, and the two therefore left Kyoto secretly and journeyed as quickly as possible to Oshu on this errand.

[1] See in the story of "My Lord Bag of Rice," *The Japanese Fairy Book* (Constable, London).

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On the way there, Ushiwaka and Benkei came to the Temple of Atsuta, and as they considered it important that the young knight should look older now, Ushiwaka performed the ceremony of *Gembuku* at the shrine. This was a rite performed in olden times when youths reached the age of manhood. They then had to shave off the front part of their hair and to change their names as a sign that they had left childhood behind. Ushiwaka now took the name of Yoshitsune. As he was the eighth son, it would have been more correct for him to have assumed the name of Hachiro, but as his uncle Tametomo the Archer, of whom you have already read, was named Hachiro, he purposely did not take this name. From this time forth our hero is known as Yoshitsune, and this name he has glorified forever by his wonderful bravery and many heroic exploits. In Japanese history he is the knight without fear and without reproach, the darling of the people, to them almost an incarnation of Hachiman, the popular God of War. And as for Benkei, never can you find in all history a vassal who was more true or loyal to his master than Benkei. He was Yoshitsune's right hand in everything, and his strength and wisdom carried them successfully through many a dire emergency.

From Kyoto to Oshu is a long journey of about three hundred miles, but at length Yoshitsune (as we must now call him) and Benkei reached their

destination and craved the General Hidehira's assistance. They found that Hidehira was a warm adherent of the Minamoto cause, and under the late Lord Yoshitomo he and his family had enjoyed great favour. When the general learned, therefore, that Yoshitsune was the son of the illustrious Minamoto chief, his joy knew no bounds, and he made Yoshitsune and Benkei heartily welcome and treated them both as guests of honour and importance.

Just at this time Yoshitsune's eldest brother, Yoritomo, who had been banished to an island in Idzu, collected a great army and raised his standard against the Taira. When the news about Yoritomo reached Yoshitsune, he rejoiced, for he felt that the hour had at last come when the Minamoto would be revenged on the Taira for all the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the latter.

With the help of Hidehira and the faithful Benkei, he collected a small army of warriors and at once marched over to his brother's camp in Idzu. He sent a messenger ahead to inform Yoritomo that his youngest brother, now named Yoshitsune, was coming to aid him in his fight against the Taira.

Yoritomo was exceedingly glad at this unexpected good news, for all that helped to swell his forces now brought nearer the day when he would be able to strike his long-planned blow at the power

of the hated Taira. As soon as Yoshitsune reached Idzu, Yoritomo arranged for an immediate meeting. Although the two men were brothers, it must be remembered that their father had been killed, and the family utterly scattered, when they were mere children, Yoshitsune being at that time but an infant in his mother's arms. As this was therefore the first time they had met Yoritomo knew nothing of his young brother's character.

One of Yoshitsune's elder brothers had come with him, and Yoritomo being a shrewd general wished to test them both to see of what mettle they were made. He ordered his retainers to bring a brass basin full of boiling water. When it was brought, Yoritomo ordered Noriyori, the elder of the two, to carry it to him first. Now brass being a good conductor of heat, the basin was very hot and Noriyori stupidly let it fall. Yoritomo ordered it to be filled again and bade Yoshitsune bring it to him. Without moving a muscle of his handsome face Yoshitsune took hold of the almost unbearably hot vessel and carried it with due ceremony slowly across the room. This exhibition of nerve and endurance filled Yoritomo with admiration and he was favourably struck with Yoshitsune's character. As for Noriyori, who had been unable to hold a hot basin for a few moments, he had no use for him at all, except as a common soldier.

Yoritomo begged Yoshitsune to become his

right-hand man and zealously to espouse his cause. Yoshitsune declared that this had been his lifelong ambition ever since he could remember,—as they both were sons of the same father, so was their cause and destiny one. Yoritomo made Yoshitsune a general of part of his army and ordered him in the name of his father Yoshitomo to chastise the Taira.

Delighted beyond all words at the wonderfully auspicious turn events were taking, Yoshitsune hastened his preparations for the march. The longed-for hour had come to which through his whole childhood and youth he had looked forward, and for which his whole being had thirsted for many years. He could now fulfil the last words of his unhappy mother, and punish the Taira for all the evil they had wrought against the Minamoto. All the wild restlessness of his youth, which had driven him forth to wield his wooden sword against the rocks in the Kuramayama Valley and to try his strength against Benkei on the Gojo Bridge, now found vent in action most dear to a born warrior's heart. With several thousands of troops under him, Yoshitsune marched up to Kyoto and waged war against the Taira, and defeated them in a series of brilliant engagements.

The stricken Taira multitudes fled before the avenger like autumn leaves before the blast, and Yoshitsune pursued them to the sea. At Dan-no-

Ura the Taira made a last stand, but all in vain. Their lion leader, Kiyomori, was dead, and there was no great chieftain to rally them in the disordered retreat that now ensued. Yoshitsune came sweeping down upon them, and they and their fleet and their infant Emperor likewise, with their women and children, sank beneath the waves. Only a scattered few lived to tell the tale of the terrible destruction that overtook them on the sea.

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Thus did Yoshitsune become a great warrior and general. Thus did he fulfil the ambitions of his youth and avenge his father Yoshitomo's death. He was without a rival in the whole country for his marvellous bravery and successive victories. He was adored by the people as their most popular hero and darling, and throughout the length and breadth of the land his praise was sung by every one.

Even to this day there is no one in Japan who has not heard the name of Yoshitsune. The next story, "The Story of Benkei," will tell you more of Yoshitsune, for the two lives are linked together in the fame and glory of noble deeds done, of dangers passed, of troubles and reverses borne, and of honours earned and joy and victory shared together — to be told and remembered forever.

THE STORY OF BENKEI

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THE STORY OF BENKEI

SEQUEL TO THE STORY OF YOSHITSUNE

THOSE who have read the story of the great warrior Yoshitsune will certainly remember that his retainer Benkei was a gigantic bonze as remarkable for his physical strength as he was for his original character. In the story of Yoshitsune very little was said about Benkei; you may therefore like to hear something more about the famous man who is so favourite a hero with Japanese children and so greatly respected in Japan for his faithfulness to his master.

Benkei was the son of a Buddhist priest named Bensho, High Steward of the Temple of Gongen at Kumano, a famous shrine from ancient times, and his mother was the daughter of a high Court official of the second rank.

Benkei was no ordinary mortal. Most children come into the world within ten months, but Benkei kept his mother waiting one year and six months for him; and when he was born he already had teeth and a luxuriant growth of hair, and was so

strong and big that he could walk from the first as well as most children of two or three years of age.

Seeing how extraordinarily big and strong he was, the family were lost in amazement; but their wonder quickly changed to dismay, for the mother died soon after giving birth to her son. The father, Bensho, was very angry at this, and took an aversion to the child who had brought, he said, so great a misfortune upon him. He even wished to abandon the boy altogether, believing that, as Benkei's birth had cost his mother's life, he would in after years only prove a curse to the family.

Now the boy's aunt (who was married to a man named Yama-no-i), hearing this, pitied her little nephew Benkei, and going to her brother said: "If you are going to treat the child so cruelly as to cast him away, please give him to me. I have no children and will bring him up as my own child. He is not responsible for his mother's death. It is fate, and there is no help for it!"

Bensho consented to her taking the child, saying that he did not care what happened to him so long as he was kept out of his sight, for he could no longer bear to see him. So Benkei was adopted by his aunt, who took him away to the capital of Kyoto.

The child rewarded her care and grew to be a fine boy beyond all expectation. He was exceedingly

strong and healthy; at five or six years of age he was equal in size and strength to boys of ten or twelve, and gave promise of unusual intelligence and cleverness.

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Unfortunately his face was as fierce as that of a demon and he looked so truly savage and ugly that he gradually earned for himself the nickname of Oni-Waka, or Demon Youth.

In a few years his uncle thought that it was time to send the boy to school, and he accordingly sent Benkei to the monastery of Eizan and placed him under the tutorship of the famous priest Kwankei. In Japan as in England in those times all learning was in the hands of the priests, and the temples were the only schools.

When Benkei arrived at Kwankei's temple he was taught the reading and writing of Chinese characters, and as he was at first docile and diligent, and obedient to all set over him, he made rapid progress, and not only satisfied but pleased his teacher, who commended his industry; but after a time he chafed at the restraint of his new surroundings and began to give trouble. Not content with being unruly himself, he would lead the other novices away from their studies into the mountains and play all kinds of rough games with them, and, of course, being by nature much stronger and bigger than any of them, none of his companions could stand against him. It therefore hap-

pened that in every contest he invariably gained the victory, and this elated him so much that he thought of nothing but his sports and his triumphs, and, neglecting his lessons entirely, practised athletic games day after day, quite forgetting everything else.

Oni-Waka's teacher, Kwankei, hearing about the youth's wild doings, and considering them as unseemly, sent for him and told him that such behaviour not only grieved his guardians but brought disgrace upon the holy temple; but his rebuke fell upon deaf ears and did no good at all. While he was being scolded, Benkei listened respectfully enough; but as soon as the reverend teacher turned his back he would forthwith be as wild, if not wilder, than ever. His conduct grew worse and worse, till at last, losing all patience, the master priest forbade him to go out of the house, and then enforced his order by shutting him up in a monastery.

This punishment Oni-Waka deeply resented, and one night, eluding the vigilance of his gaolers, he stole out quietly, and picking up a great log of wood began to destroy everything he could. First he smashed the gateway; then the fences all round the temple; then he broke the shutters and the sliding screens inside; indeed everything he could reach, he wrecked. The bonzes, roused from their slumbers by the unexpected noise,

which sounded as if a troop of robbers were at work, were all so frightened that they could do nothing to stop the whirlwind of destruction. When Oni-Waka had done all the mischief he could he felt that, after this last mad prank, the Temple of Eizan was no place for him, so he fled from the spot forever. He was now just seventeen years of age, and he called himself Musashi Bo Benkei.

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Oni-Waka showed a sense of humour when he called himself Musashi Bo Benkei. In olden times there lived in Eizan a man named Musashi, who was turbulent and wild in his youth, and yet became a famous bonze and lived until the ripe age of sixty-one. Oni-Waka, having heard about this famous man, made up his mind to be like him, and therefore called himself Musashi Bo, or Musashi the Bonze. The first syllable — "Ben" — of *Ben*kei was taken from the first character of his father's name (Bensho), and the second — "kei" — was the last syllable of his teacher's name (Kwan*kei*). The name *Benkei* was therefore a combination of the names of his father and teacher.

Ashamed to return home to his uncle and aunt after his behaviour at the monastery, Benkei made up his mind to travel. This he did much after the fashion of German apprentices at about the same period in Europe. Leaving Kyoto, he came to Osaka; from Osaka he went to the province of Awa in the island of Shikoku; he then travelled all

through that island, and thence wandered back to the mainland, where in the province of Harima he came at last to a monastery called Shosa. This monastery was as large as that of Eizan, and Benkei thought that he would like to stay there for a time as a student. With the consent of the abbot, Benkei was enrolled as an acolyte of this temple.

Among the numerous novices in the temple there was one named Kaien, who was nearly as fond of mischief as Benkei himself, and he was known in the neighbourhood for a troublesome fellow, no one young or old being safe from his foolish pranks. One day soon after Benkei's arrival, Kaien found the newcomer taking a nap, so for fun he wrote on Benkei's cheek the Chinese character for *geta*, or "clog."

When Benkei woke up and went into the courtyard he noticed that everybody he came near seemed to be laughing at him, though nobody would say why.

Thinking that there must be something strange in his appearance he glanced into a bowl of water and at once discovered the cause of the merriment. Angry at the trick played on him, he seized a thick stick and rushing into the midst of his fellow novices shouted: "You rogues! I suppose you thought that you were doing something clever when you scribbled on my face. Now just come here, one by one, and kneel down and beg my par-

don. If you do not you will soon be sorry for yourselves."

Benkei looked so angry and spoke so fiercely that most of the acolytes were frightened. Four or five of the boldest, however, answered him back, saying: "What do you mean, you lazy fellow, by complaining about a trick played upon you while you were asleep in the middle of the day? If we hear any more of your grumbling, we will throw you out of the monastery."

In this way they tried to frighten Benkei, but he did not budge an inch, and his only reply was to lift his stick and knock down the four or five who had spoken.

Seeing this, Kaien, the author of all this trouble, rushed up, saying: "You are a coward to attack fellows half your size. Suppose for a change you fight with me!"

Then looking round for a weapon, and seeing a large log of wood on a fire close by, he picked it up and faced the enraged Benkei, adding: "It was I who scribbled on your face. If you are angry, come on and let us fight it out!"

The two closed at once and fought for some time; then Benkei grew impatient, and seizing Kaien by his collar and belt lifted him off his feet. The other novices, seeing this, cried out in alarm: "Kaien has been lifted off his feet. He can't fight now. He is helpless!"

Then they shouted to Kaien to apologize and save himself.

"Pardon! Pardon! Benkei! Mercy!" screamed the youth, now bitterly repenting his folly.

Benkei, however, did not hear Kaien's cry for mercy, for he was like a madman now. He hardly knew what he did or said, for his blood was fired by the taunts of the young men and by the fight.

"You shall die," screamed Benkei, "mannerless coward that you are; you shall die, I say, and your carcass shall be eaten by crows!" With these words he shook Kaien as mercilessly as a dog does a rat, and then flung him upon the tiled roof of the chapel, a height of some fourteen or fifteen feet. Kaien fell on the roof, rolled down the tiles, and at last, striking a rock in the garden, was killed on the spot. When the foolish and unfortunate lad was flung up on the roof by Benkei, he still held the smoking brand which he had all to no purpose used against his antagonist and this, falling on the building, flared up and set fire to the temple. Just then a breeze sprang up and fanned the flames into a fierce blaze; sparks from the roof dropped upon the curving tiers of the five-storied pagoda, and the main gateway, and the school and the houses of the bonzes, till the whole of the monastery was in a blaze. Seeing the conflagration, all the inmates were lost in consternation. Shouting "Fire! Fire!" some of them ran to draw water from the

well, while others threw sand on the flames, and in the excitement and general confusion which followed, Benkei, the cause of the calamity, was forgotten.

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In the midst of the tremendous tumult and disturbance Benkei laughed quietly to himself.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed; "look at the fire and the stir I have made! I have never seen the lazy bonzes know what it is to hurry before. It will do them good for once in a way!"

Then he slipped away from the temple and made his way back to Kyoto.

Benkei, wild and unruly as he was, cannot be judged by the standard of conduct of to-day. Those times were very different from these days of peace and order. Young men were encouraged to do rough violent deeds to show their strength and courage, and if they killed their antagonists in the fight, so much the more did this redound to their credit. It was the custom for a young *samurai* on obtaining a sword to go out into the highways to try the mettle of his blade. Woe to those who passed by; their blood must baptize the knight's sword. This training bred a martial spirit in the youth of Japan, and produced brave men of dauntless courage and resolution like Benkei, who became such a hero in after-life.

Benkei was, however, by this time tired of study and of living the dull life of a bonze, and he now

made up his mind to rove about in search of adventures, determining that, should he find a stronger man than himself, he would become that man's vassal, turn from his wild ways and lead the life of a good *samurai*, faithful to his lord and a good patriot to his country. But first of all he must find the man stronger than he to whom he would bow his proud strong neck. He longed now to find a master worthy of respect, whom he could reverence as his superior. How was this to be done? At last an idea struck him. He had determined to be a soldier and enter the service of a *samurai;* he must therefore get a good sword. Violent and impetuous as ever, to this end he now vowed to take a thousand swords from the citizens of Kyoto. To carry out his wild scheme he went nightly to the Gojo Bridge, and when men passed along bearing swords in their girdles he would rush suddenly out, attack them furiously, and snatch away their swords. He never pursued those who ran away, for he deemed them cowards and would not waste his time or strength on such creatures; but those who opposed him he would mow down with a single sweep of his great halberd. In this way he had attacked nine hundred and ninety-nine men and taken away nine hundred and ninety-nine swords; each time he had hoped to meet his match in the numerous contests, but not one among the whole number proved a serious foe.

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Accordingly the swords Benkei had thus collected were all poor weapons, for weak men have like swords; they were blunt and badly tempered and of not the slightest use to him. He was heartily disappointed, and began to think that perhaps he had better abandon the enterprise as a vain one. In desperation, however, he determined to get one more sword and thus complete the total of one thousand blades, the number he had first of all set his mind upon. In spite of discouragement, he told himself that it would be stupid to give up at this point.

As soon as he had decided to do this, his spirits revived, and for some unaccountable reason he felt that this time he would be lucky, and able to secure once for all a good weapon. He waited impatiently for the evening, and as soon as the twilight fell he made his preparations and went as usual to the Gojo Bridge. It happened to be the night of the fifteenth day of August, and the beautiful harvest moon sailed up into the serene heaven, above the hills and the tall dark velvety pines and cryptomerias, and the sleeping world was bathed in her soft silvery brilliance. For a long time Benkei stood leaning against the parapet of the bridge, entranced by the fair scene spread out before him in the moonlight and apparently quite forgetful for the time being of his purpose. Suddenly the stillness of the beautiful

night was broken by the sound of a flute. Benkei started from his reverie. The music drew nearer and nearer, and then he saw a slight figure approaching from the other end of the bridge. The newcomer wore a kind of white veil and high black-lacquered clogs, and was playing on his flute as he strolled along. Benkei watched the approaching stranger and saw at once that this was no ordinary passer-by.

At first he thought that this must be a woman, for the moonlight revealed a slender grace in walking and then on nearer view a face of extreme youth and aristocratic beauty. He could not find the heart to attack the mysterious and gentle unknown, and decided to let him or her pass unmolested; but while he was wondering who the person, so unlike all the others he had met on the bridge, could be, the supposed lady all of a sudden stepped up to Benkei and kicked the latter's halberd out of his hand.

"What are you doing?" shouted Benkei, in a rage when he had recovered from his astonishment; and recovering his halberd he pulled off what he supposed to be the lady's veil. To his surprise he found that the adventurous stranger was a handsome youth who might easily be mistaken for a girl, and then Benkei's eyes fell upon a splendid gold-mounted sword which the lad carried in his girdle. He said to himself that he had not waited

so long in vain, that he was verily in luck this night to have such a bird come into net. While these thoughts flashed through his mind, Benkei clutched at the sword, but the youth was far stronger than he looked, and the instant Benkei put forth his hand the young fellow flung a heavy fan in his face, saying: "How brave you think yourself, don't you?" and darted out of his reach.

This made Benkei more angry than ever, and with threatening exclamations he lifted his halberd to deal a smashing blow on the young knight. But the lad was far too quick for Benkei and sprang about with the nimbleness of a monkey, and no matter how Benkei aimed his blows, they never reached the mark. Never had Benkei seen such agility and adroitness. Sometimes the youth appeared in front and sometimes behind, now on one side and again on the other, and as often as Benkei turned he would find that his opponent had shifted his position like lightning. At length Benkei grew tired and a sense of awe began to take hold of his mind, for he now felt that the youth must be a supernatural being, or a *tengu*, and no common mortal, and this feeling grew upon him so strongly that he began to lose heart. He knew now that he was no longer invincible as he had hitherto been. Then the lad, who had hitherto acted on the defensive, began to push his advantage, and, at-

tacking Benkei in good earnest, beat down the latter's guard and disarmed him.

When the redoubtable Benkei, who had never yet been beaten by any one in his whole life, found himself thus ignominiously defeated, he was astonished beyond words, and there and then, kneeling down on the bridge, bowed low before the young man and humbly said: "Will you condescend to tell me whose son you are, and your name? Something tells me that you are no common man!"

The handsome youth laughed and replied: "I am the eighth and youngest son of Minamoto Yoshitomo, and my name is Minamoto Ushiwaka," and with these words he allowed Benkei to rise.

"What do I hear?" exclaimed Benkei; "are you indeed the young knight Minamoto Ushiwaka, of whom I have heard so much? I felt from the first that you were a person of distinction. As for myself, I am simply Musashi Bo Benkei. For a long time I have been looking for a man stronger than myself, to whom I could look up as my master. I have led a wild life for a long time, but if you will take me into your service I will be a good and faithful vassal."

Ushiwaka, who had heard of Benkei's remarkable strength, and who had come out that night to the Gojo Bridge for the purpose of meeting the notorious man with the hope of winning him to

his side, was delighted at the turn events had taken and promised to take Benkei into his service, and in this way the brave youth and the giant priest became associated as lord and vassal.

From this hour Benkei was a completely changed character. He gave up his wild ways and became obedient to his young master, who was the only one he had found a match for his imposing strength and will. He served his new lord with the utmost devotion, and fought bravely in every battle which Yoshitsune (Ushiwaka's name when he came of age) waged against the Taira clan at the famous battles of Ichi-nō-tani and Dan-no-Ura, of which you will have read in the story of Yoshitsune.

Yoshitsune won victory after victory, driving his Taira enemies to the sea, where they miserably perished at Dan-no-Ura, and it seemed to the wondering people that he must be the impersonation of Hachiman, the God of War.

So handsome and brave was he that they had never seen or heard of his like before, and throughout Japan every one praised and loved him. Now Yoritomo, when he saw his brother's popularity, became jealous, and Kajiwara, one of his generals, who hated Yoshitsune because the young knight had once openly reproved him for cowardice, seized the opportunity to poison Yoritomo's mind against his younger brother; he suggested that

Yoshitsune's aim was to supplant Yoritomo in supreme authority. Sad to say, Yoritomo believed this wicked slander. Therefore, when Yoshitsune, covered with glory and honour, returned from the wars, bringing with him, as prisoners of war, Munemori, the Taira chieftain, and his son (Kiyomori was now dead), he found that Yoritomo had erected a barrier near Koshigoe, just outside Kamakura. Here he sent a guard to receive the prisoners, but on the ground that Yoshitsune was guilty of treachery, Yoritomo refused him admittance into Kamakura. In vain did Yoshitsune protest against the unjust accusation; in vain did he write a touching letter avowing his unaltered love and devotion to Yoritomo; in vain did he recount all the hardships endured on the campaigns which the young and chivalrous general had undertaken at the command of his brother. He was not believed, and ingratitude was the only reward he received for devotion to his brother's cause. At this crisis Yoshitsune found himself banished and every part of Japan rendered unsafe for his residence, for Yoritomo ordered him to be arrested. When this time of trouble came, Benkei was indefatigable in his efforts to guard Yoshitsune's person from danger. He followed him in his flight and exile and never left his master's side.

Yoshitsune now returned to Kyoto for a time. Soon after he arrived there Yoritomo sent a man

named Tosabo to compass his death. This man, like Benkei, had formerly been a bonze, and he gave out that he had come to visit the temples of the capital.

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Tosabo knew very well what a shrewd and clever warrior Yoshitsune was, and he doubted his own ability to cope with the task he had undertaken. He therefore decided that he would wait until Yoshitsune was completely off his guard, and then make a sudden attack upon the house where he was staying. He told his followers of his plan and secretly prepared for the raid.

Yoshitsune soon learned of Tosabo's coming, for the people of Kyoto and its neighbourhood, where he had lived as a boy, were devoted to him. The young general, knowing that Tosabo was in Yoritomo's service, regarded him with suspicion. He told Benkei of his fears, and Benkei at once volunteered to go and summon Tosabo to the house and question him.

Yoshitsune agreed to the plan, and Benkei immediately set off for Tosabo's house.

"Now, Tosabo," said he, "my Lord Yoshitsune desires to see you, so you are to come back with me at once!"

Benkei's manner was so fierce and determined that Tosabo felt alarmed and he therefore pretended to be ill; but Benkei was not to be balked in that stupid way, and shouting: "If you are not

quick, I'll seize you and take you whether you will or not!" he grabbed Tosabo by his girdle and lifted him up as if he had been a child, tucked him under one arm, and, mounting his horse, carried him off.

There were several of Tosabo's retainers present at the interview, but they were all trembling with fear and did not dare to put forth a hand to help their master.

Benkei thus conducted Tosabo into the presence of Yoshitsune by force, and both master and vassal began to examine him strictly; but Tosabo was such an audacious rascal that, notwithstanding the fact that he had actually come from Yoritomo, hired as an assassin, he refused to confess anything. With great humility he feigned surprise at being suspected of entertaining designs against Yoshitsune's life, saying that he was but a poor bonze in Yoritomo's service, and as Yoshitsune was his master's brother, he (Tosabo) regarded him as his lord also. Nothing else but a religious fast and retreat had called him to Kyoto!

Now Yoshitsune and Benkei had no actual proof of his guilt, so they allowed Tosabo to go free, first making him sign a document declaring that he was not a hired assassin. In truth neither of them believed the crafty man, but thought him too despicable an enemy to fear, and made up their minds that, if he and his gang planned a night assault, the party could be easily repulsed and put to

flight. Tosabo on his part congratulated himself on his cleverness, returned home, armed his men, and made an attack on Yoshitsune's residence.

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Yoshitsune that night, thinking that at any rate for some time he was quite safe from attack, made merry with all his men. Drinking amber-coloured wine they sat up late, and when at last the young general retired to rest, having drunk much he slept a deep sleep. His beautiful young wife Shizuka, who accompanied him in all his wanderings, fearing she knew not what, that night alone kept watch beside her lord's couch. She was the first to hear the approach of Tosabo and his soldiers. Vainly she tried to rouse Yoshitsune; she called him, she shook him, but all in vain, — he slept on. Shizuka was frantic. She heard the enemy at the gate trying to batter it down. Suddenly the thought struck her, as if by inspiration, that the most thrilling call to arms to a warrior must be the sound of his armour. She rushed to the box in the hall, and heavy as it was for her slender strength, she lifted out the armour. She dragged it quickly into the room. Then over Yoshitsune's head she waved it to and fro. "Clang — clang," sounded the armour, "clang — clang." Up sprang the warrior, seized the suit of armour, and with Shizuka's help dressed himself for battle. All this took place without a single word. Benkei and the rest of his soldiers soon joined him and the enemy were put to flight. To-

sabo managed to escape and hide himself in the mountains of Kurama, near Kyoto, but he was caught and put to death at last.

To have been able to thwart and punish the assassins from Kamakura was a source of great satisfaction to Yoshitsune and his men; but when the story reached Yoritomo he was very wroth, and issued another decree entirely disowning Yoshitsune and declaring him an enemy to the state.

Yoshitsune felt that Yoritomo was acting most unjustly towards him, for he knew himself to be entirely blameless of plotting against Yoritomo's supremacy; but as it was useless to contend against his elder brother, who as Shogun was the military ruler of Japan, he decided to leave Kyoto and escape to some other place. He therefore planned to cross from the province of Settsu to Saikoku in a ship; but when they reached Dan-no-Ura, where Yoshitsune had finally conquered and all but exterminated the Taira clan, the fine weather they had hitherto experienced suddenly changed, the sky became overcast with black clouds, rain began to fall in torrents, the wind began to blow, and gradually the waves rose higher and higher, and shipwreck became imminent. As the darkness deepened about them, though they could see nothing, over the water there came weird sounds of the din of battle, the rushing of ships through the sea, the shouting and trampling of men, the whiz-

THE PHANTOM HOST DREW NEARER TO THE BOAT

zing of arrows in the air; all around them as the ship sped on, the tumult of the fight grew louder, till Yoshitsune felt that he was living again through that awful and never-to-be-forgotten battle.

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Then from amid the rolling waves, which every moment threatened to engulf the boat, arose pale, ghastly forms whose wan faces were terrible to see. Clad in blood-stained, battle-torn armour and ravaged with gaping wounds, these warrior ghosts raised threatening hands, as if to stop the progress of the boat, while moanings of despair and hollow sobs and shrieks burst from the spectre army. Among the foremost figures was one who brandished a huge halberd, and as he approached, he addressed Yoshitsune, saying: "Aha! Revenge! Revenge! Behold in me the ghost of Taira-no-Tomomori, general of the Taira clan, ruthlessly destroyed by you! Long have I waited here for you and now I will slay you all, for not until then will the slaughtered Taira rest in their watery graves."

Through the tossing, whirling waters, with the wind shrieking round them, and a weird blue phosphoric light making everything visible, the phantom host drew nearer and nearer to the boat. But Yoshitsune did not seem to be in the least alarmed. As dauntless as ever, he stood up in the prow and faced the ghosts of the men whom he had slain in that terrible battle, and flashing forth his keen blade, said: "So you are the spirits of

the Taira clan, are you? And you have risen from the ocean-bed to haunt us, and to impede our progress, and to inflict evil upon us? Have you forgotten how I drove you before me as dust before the wind when you were alive? It is a pity you have not profited by past experiences! I should have thought that you would have had no wish to see me again!"

With these words he was about to brandish his sword and attack the spectres, but Benkei, the wise and faithful Benkei, stepped up to his young master and stayed his hand, saying: "Not so, my lord. Swords are useless against ghosts. It is not wise to anger these poor earth-bound phantoms. The best way of dealing with them is to pacify them, so that they may find peace and go to their own place."

Yoshitsune yielded to Benkei and allowed himself to be put aside. Then Benkei, who, you will remember, had formerly been a Buddhist priest, drew out a small rosary which he always carried with him, and telling his beads, and rubbing his hands together, palm to palm, began to recite prayers earnestly and reverently in a loud voice. The sacred words appointed by the Buddhist Church fell like a benediction upon the angry spirits, the wailing and the howling and the tumult of the phantom conflict ceased, and the wraiths gradually vanished into the sea from whence they had arisen; the storm

ceased, and the weather cleared and became as fine and peaceful as it was before, and the travellers soon reached the land in safety.

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Across the mountains Yoshitsune now fled, and after endless adventures and hairbreadth escapes, he determined to seek the help of his old friend and partisan, the General Hidehira, in the province of Oshu. On the way thither they came to a guard-house at Ataka, in Kaga Province. This guard-house was one of the principal frontier stations at which in those feudal times all travellers had to give an account of themselves. Yoritomo had by this time issued a proclamation ordering the arrest of Yoshitsune, so the young general and Benkei and the handful of faithful men still left to him disguised themselves as wandering priests, wearing loose caps on their heads, carrying wallets on their backs, and grasping pilgrim staves in their hands. Yoshitsune himself was disguised as a *goriki*, or coolie, attendant on the priests. They travelled slowly until they came to the barrier, consulting together as to how they should pass it, for they heard that the sentries suspected every one and were examining passers-by very strictly. Only the previous day three mendicants had been killed, owing to the suspicion of the guards having been excited.

All Yoshitsune's followers, among whom were many brave, loyal, though headstrong young fel-

lows, wanted to storm the guard-house and cut their way through the soldiers, but Benkei was strongly opposed to this and said: "No, no, that will never do! A quarrel would cost some of our lives, and we have few enough as it is. Leave the matter to me to manage and I 'll get you through."

No one ever gainsaid Benkei, when he spoke with authority like that, for they all knew what a mountain of strength and resource he was in time of need. So Benkei, as ever, had his way. He disguised Yoshitsune in the dress of a servant (*goriki*), and gave him a deep broad-brimmed hat of bamboo to wear, and made him tuck up his robe into his belt; then, advancing in front of the others, he leisurely approached the guard-house, and with an air of the utmost unconcern and nonchalance said: "We are mendicant priests who are travelling throughout the various provinces for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions for the rebuilding of the shrine of the Great Buddha at the Todaiji Temple, in Nara. We ask permission to pass the barrier."

Now the captain of the guard was a very clever man and a strict observer of rules, and he would not let Benkei pass without questioning him thoroughly.

"Well, as you say you are visiting the various provinces soliciting subscriptions for the purpose of rebuilding the Shrine of the Great Buddha, it is possible that I may allow you to pass, but you

must show me positive proof of the truth of your story," said the captain of the guard.

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Benkei was staggered for a moment when he heard these words. What should he do? But he was a quick-witted man, and without betraying any sign of being taken by surprise, he answered with composure: "Very good, then, I will read you my commission written by the High Priest himself in the first pages of the subscription-book."

With these words, speculating upon the ignorance of the guard, with great dignity he drew out a scroll, and pressing it with reverence to his forehead, began to improvise and read out an imaginary letter from the High Priest of the Todaiji Temple for the rebuilding of a shrine for the Daibutsu, at Nara. At the first mention of the name of the priest, so famous and so highly revered throughout the country, the captain of the guard, it is said, fell respectfully upon his knees and listened, face bent to the earth in humble awe, to the contents of the letter. So well did Benkei play his part that the sentry was convinced of the genuine character of the commission and said: "I am satisfied. There is no reason to detain you. You may pass!"

Benkei was overjoyed, and thought that at length all difficulties had been overcome. At the head of the fugitive band, with Yoshitsune disguised as an attendant in the rear, he was moving

forward to pass through the barrier when the captain suddenly darted forward and stopped Yoshitsune, saying in a loud voice: "Wait a moment, you coolie! Wait a moment!"

"We are discovered," thought Benkei; and even he, dauntless and cool in the face of all danger hitherto, felt his heart beating violently in the intense excitement of this momentous crisis.

But it was no time for hesitation, and recognizing that the whole situation hung upon that very moment, Benkei, with his usual pluck and daring, pulled himself together and coolly asked: "Have you anything to say to this coolie whom you have stopped?"

"Of course I have, and that is why I have stopped him," replied the sentry.

"And may I ask what your business with him is?" inquired Benkei.

"This coolie," answered the captain, "is said by my soldiers to resemble Lord Yoshitsune, and I stopped him so that I might examine him."

"What!" shouted Benkei, pretending to be overcome with laughter at the idea, "this coolie resembles Lord Yoshitsune? Ha! ha! ha! Oh, this is indeed too comical for anything! I wondered why you arrested him, but never thought of his being stopped for such an absurd reason. But as a matter of fact he has been mistaken for Lord Yoshitsune over and over again by several people,

and you are by no means the only one who has had his suspicions aroused. You see the fellow is handsome and has a very white skin like an aristocrat, and that's all the good there is about him, but on that account I have had an immense amount of trouble with him."

Then Benkei turned to Yoshitsune, saying: "Wretched creature! it is all your fault that we come under suspicion all the time. You shuffle along in such a cowardly manner and put on such strange airs that people naturally suspect you. In future be more careful, and walk along like a man and not in such a mincing way, you fool!"

Thus Benkei feigned to lose his temper, and after scolding Yoshitsune roughly, finally lifted his staff and gave him several blows across the back, telling him to fall upon his knees and not presume to remain standing in the presence of the guard.

The captain of the guard had been watching this scene for some moments, and when he saw Benkei start in and thrash Yoshitsune, his doubts were completely allayed; for he thought that if the apparent servant were really Yoshitsune and the mendicant priest the latter's retainer, the vassal would never dare to assault his master in this fashion.

"Ah! it was my fault and carelessness. Evidently it was an entire mistake on our part to think this coolie was Lord Yoshitsune, and it is

not the poor fellow's fault, so pray do not beat him any more! Continue your journey at once and take him with you."

Benkei's trick thus succeeded completely. The captain reëntered the guard-house and the young lord and his vassals passed at last unhindered through the strictly guarded gate, saved as ever by the quick-wittedness of Benkei.

Now some say that the captain of the guard was not deceived; that he knew that the disguised priests and attendant were Yoshitsune and his party, but his whole sympathy was with the hunted hero and his brave few and he allowed them to pass. For a *samurai* must ever show mercy and sympathy, especially to his fellows and to those in distress. The strict examination he insisted upon was a farce he played to satisfy the authorities at Kamakura.

Yoshitsune and his followers were filled with admiration at the wisdom of Benkei, and great were the praise and thanks they rendered him on this occasion; but Benkei, full of reverence and devotion to his master, never ceased to deplore the necessity which drove him to beat his own lord and apologized with great humility. Whenever the story was told, he would shed tears of sorrow and declare that he would rather have been beaten to death himself than have been obliged by circumstances to strike Yoshitsune.

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Thus once by force of arms he put to flight the would-be assassins of Yoshitsune at Kyoto; by reciting Buddhist prayers he laid the ghosts of the Taira warriors in the sea at Dan-no-Ura; and by sheer wit and sagacity he brought his party across the dangerous frontier; and at length he managed to arrive safely with his beloved master at the Oshu residence of the famous General Hidehira.

He now thought that all troubles were over; but unfortunately this story soon reached Kamakura City, and Yoritomo, furious at Yoshitsune's daring, despatched a large army to chastise him.

At this time Yoshitsune's camp was pitched beside the river Koromo, and the army from Kamakura, swarming up in countless thousands on the opposite bank, discharged volley after volley of arrows at the brave but ill-fated band. Yoshitsune's handful of men were entirely unable to face the overwhelming numbers, and fled in confusion, seeking shelter in the neighbouring woods and valleys or hiding themselves in the mountains. But Benkei, despising flight, refused to budge, and stood without moving while showers of arrows fell like rain around him. At length the enemy saw that Benkei stood immovable with his seven weapons on his back, grasping his great halberd in both hands. Wondering at the sight, they drew near for the purpose of solving the mystery. As they approached, the giant still remained standing; not

an eyelid flinched, as his eyes, wide open, glared fiercely at the soldiers. No wonder that the giant did not stir, for arrows were sticking all over his body like quills on a porcupine, and it was evident that he had died standing with his face to the enemy.

This story is known far and wide throughout Japan, and you can imagine what a brave sturdy warrior he must have been to have died in this way, fighting to the last.

Another story tells how the enemy came up to the wonderful figure of Benkei and found it to be but a straw dummy, and that by this device Benkei gained time for his beloved lord, with whom he escaped into the North, leaving their enemies far behind. Such is the story of Benkei, and the story does not end here; for tradition relates with much circumstance, as traditions always do, that Benkei's master became the conqueror of Northern Asia, known to after ages as the famous Genghis Khan.

DIED STANDING WITH HIS FACE TO THE ENEMY

THE GOBLIN OF OYEYAMA

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THE GOBLIN OF OYEYAMA

LONG, long ago in Old Japan, in the reign of the Emperor Ichijo, the sixty-sixth Emperor, there lived a very brave general called Minamoto-no-Raiko. Minamoto was the name of the powerful clan to which he belonged, and in England it would be called his surname, and Raiko, or Yorimitsu,[1] was his own name.

In those times it was the custom for generals to keep as a body-guard four picked knights renowned for their daring spirit, their great strength, and their skill in wielding the sword. These four braves were called Shitenno, or Four Kings of Heaven, and they participated in all the exploits and martial expeditions of their chief, and vied with one another in excelling in bravery and dexterity.

Minamoto-no-Raiko was no exception to the general rule of those ancient leaders of Japan, and he had under him Usui-Sadamitsu, Sakata

[1] *Raiko, or Yorimitsu.* Both names are written with the same ideographs. Raiko is the Chinese pronunciation, and Yorimitsu the Japanese rendering.

Kintoki, Urabe Suetake, and Watanabe Tsuna (the clan or surname comes first in Japan). Search the wide world from north to south and from east to west, and no braver warriors than the Shitenno of Minamoto-no-Raiko could you find. Each one of the four was said to be a match single-handed for a thousand men. They lived for adventure, and their delight was in war.

Now it happened about this time that Kyoto, the capital, was ringing with the stories of the doings of a frightful demon that lived in the fastnesses of a high mountain called Mount Oye, in the province of Tamba. This goblin or demon's name was Shutendoji. To look upon the creature was a horrible thing, and those who once caught sight of him never forgot the sight to their dying day. He sometimes took upon him the form of a human being, and leaving his den would steal into the capital and haunt the streets and carry off precious sons and beloved daughters of the Kyoto homes. Having seized these treasures and flowers of the people, he would drag them to his castle in the wilds of Mount Oye, and there he would make them work and wait upon him till he was ready to devour them, then he would tear them limb from limb.

For a long time the flower of the youth of the capital had been kidnapped in this way; many homes had been made desolate. For a long, long

time no one had the least idea of what happened to the sons and daughters thus stolen, but at the period when this story begins, the dread news of the cannibal Shutendoji and his mountain den began to be noised abroad.

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Now at the Court there was an official, Knight Kimitaka by name, who was thrice happy in the possession of a beautiful daughter. She was his only child, and upon her he and his wife doted. One day the darling of the family disappeared, and no trace whatsoever of the beautiful girl could be found. The household was plunged into the deepest grief and misery. The mother at last determined to consult a soothsayer, and, bidding an attendant follow her, she repaired to the house of a famous fortune-teller and diviner, who revealed to her that her daughter had been stolen away by the goblin of Mount Oye. The mother hastened home terror-stricken, and the father, when he was told the dire news, was dumb with grief. He gave up going on duty at the Palace, for he was so broken-hearted that he could do nothing but weep night and day over the loss of his only daughter. To lose her was bad enough, but the thought of the horrible hands into which she had fallen was unendurable, and all who loved the poor child, even her own father, were powerless to save her. Oh! the bitter, bitter grief!

At last the Emperor heard of the sorrow that

Raiko told them of the expedition, and explained that, as the demon was no common foe, he thought it wise that they should go to his mountain in disguise; in this way they would the more likely and the more easily overcome the goblin. They all agreed to what their chief said and set about making their preparations with great joy. They polished up their armour and sharpened their long swords and tried on their helmets, rejoicing in the prospect of the action confronting them. Before starting on this dangerous enterprise, they thought it wise to seek the protection and blessing of the gods, so Raiko and Yasumasa went to pray for help at the Temple of Hachiman, the God of War, at Mount Otoko, while Tsuna and Kintoki went to the Sumiyoshi Shrine of the Goddess of Mercy, and Sadamitsu and Suetake to the Temple of Gongen at Kumano. At each shrine the six knights offered up the same prayer for divine help and strength, and on bended knees and with hands laid palm to palm they besought the gods to grant them success in their expedition and a safe return to the capital.

Then the brave band disguised themselves as mountain priests. They wore priests' caps and sacerdotal garments and stoles; they hid their armour and their helmets and their weapons in the knapsacks they carried on their backs; in their right hands they carried a pilgrim's staff, and in

their left a rosary, and they wore rough straw sandals on their feet. No one meeting these dignified, solemn-looking priests would have thought that they were on the way to attack the goblin of Mount Oye, and no one would have dreamt that the leader of the band was the warrior Raiko, who for courage and strength had not his peer in the whole of the Island Empire.

In this way Raiko and his men travelled across the country till at last they reached the province of Tamba and came to the foot of the mountain of Oye. Now as the goblin had chosen Mount Oye as his place of abode, you can imagine how difficult of access it was! Raiko and his men had often travelled in mountainous districts, but they had never experienced anything like the steepness of Mount Oye. It was indescribable. Great rocks obstructed the way, and the branches of the trees were so thickly interlaced overhead that the light of day could not penetrate through the foliage even at midday, and the shadows were so black that the warriors would have been glad of lanterns. Sometimes the path led them over precipices where they could hear the water rushing along the deep ravines beneath. So deep were these chasms that as Raiko and his men passed them they were overcome with giddiness. For the first time they realized now the dangers and difficulties of the task they had undertaken, and they were somewhat

disheartened. At times they rested themselves on the roots of trees to gain breath, sometimes they stopped to quench their thirst at some trickling spring, catching the water up in their hands. They did not, however, allow themselves to be discouraged long, but pushed their way deeper and deeper into the mountain, encouraging each other with brave words of cheer when they felt their spirits flagging. But the thought sometimes crossed their minds, though they one and all kept it to themselves, "What if Shutendoji, or some of his demons, should be lurking behind any of the rocks or cliffs?"

Suddenly from behind a rock three old men appeared. Now Raiko, who was as wise as he was brave, and who at that very moment had been thinking of what he should do were they to encounter the goblin unexpectedly, thought that sure enough here were some of the goblins, who had heard of his approach. They had simply disguised themselves as these venerable old men so as to deceive him and his men! But he was not to be outwitted by any such prank. He made signs with his eyes to the men behind him to be on their guard, and they in obedience to his gesture put themselves in attitudes of defence.

The three old men saw at once the mistake Raiko had made, for they smiled at him and then drawing nearer, they bowed before him, and the

foremost one said: "Do not be afraid of us; we are not the goblins of this mountain. I am from the province of Settsu. My friend is from Kii, and the third lives near the capital. We have all been bereft of our beloved wives and daughters by Shutendoji the goblin. Because of our great age we can do nothing to help them, though our sorrow for their loss, instead of growing less, grows greater day by day. We have heard of your coming, and we have awaited you here, so that we might ask you to help us in our distress. It is a great favour we ask, but we entreat you if you encounter Shutendoji to show him no mercy, but to slay him and so avenge the wrongs of our wives and children and many others who have been torn away from their homes in the Flower Capital."

Raiko listened attentively to all the old man said, and then answered: "Now that you have told me so much, I need not reserve the truth from you"; and he went on to tell them of the order he had received from the Emperor to destroy Shutendoji and his den, and the warrior did his best to comfort the old men and to assure them that he would do all in his power to restore their kidnapped wives and daughters.

Then the old men expressed great joy; their faces beamed like the sun as they thanked Raiko warmly for his kind sympathy, and they presented him with a jar of *saké*, saying as they bowed low:

"As a token of our gratitude we wish to present you with this magic wine. It is called 'Shimben-Kidoku-Shu.' The name means, 'a cordial for men but a poison to goblins.' Therefore if a demon drinks of this wine, all his strength will go from him, and he will be as one paralyzed. Before you attack Shutendoji, give him to drink of this wine, and for the rest you will find no difficulty."

And with these words the venerable spokesman handed the warrior a small white stone jar containing the wine. As soon as Raiko had taken the jar into his hands, a radiance like that of sunlight suddenly shone round the old men, and they vanished upwards from sight till their shining figures were lost in the clouds.

The warriors were struck with astonishment. They gazed upwards as if stupefied. But Raiko was the first to recover from his surprise. He clapped his hands and laughed as he said: "Be not afraid at what you have seen! Be sure that the three who thus appeared to us are none other than the gods of the shrines we visited before starting on this perilous enterprise. The old man who said he was from Settsu must have been the deity of Sumiyoshi, the one from the province of Kii was the divinity of Kumano, and the one from the capital the god Hachiman of Mount Otoko. This is a most propitious sign. The three deities have taken us under their special protection. This *saké*

is their gift, and it will surely be of magic power in helping us to overcome the demons. We must, therefore, render thanks to Heaven for the protection vouchsafed to us."

Then Raiko and his five knights knelt down on the mountain pass and bowed themselves to the ground and prayed for some minutes in silence, overcome with awe at the thought that the three gods whose aid they had invoked had visited them. Raiko sprang to his feet and lifted the jar of *saké* reverently above his head, then he placed it with his armour and weapons in the box he carried on his back. Having done this, they all proceeded on their way, but oh! how safe and confident they now felt. Raiko with his magic wine felt more than a match for any demon now. There is a proverb which says, "A giant with an iron rod," which means strength added to strength, and this was fully illustrated in the case of Raiko. The goblin Shutendoji was now to be pitied; it would surely go hard with him!

As they sped on their way they came to a mountain stream, and here they found a damsel washing a blood-stained garment, and as she washed and beat the garment against the current, they saw that she often had to stop and wipe the tears away with her sleeve, for she was weeping bitterly. Raiko's heart was stirred with pity at her distress, and he went up to her and said: "This is a goblin-

haunted mountain; how is it that I find a damsel such as you here?"

The Princess (for such she was) looked up in his face wonderingly and said: "It is indeed true that this is a goblin-haunted mountain, and hitherto inaccessible to mortals. How is it that you have managed to get here?" and she looked from Raiko to his men.

Then Raiko said: "I will tell you the truth quite frankly. The Emperor has commanded us to slay the demon; that is why we are here!"

Without waiting to hear any more, the Princess ran up to Raiko in her joy and clung to him, crying out in broken sentences: "Are you indeed the great Raiko of whom I have so often heard? How thankful I am that you have come. I will be your guide to the goblin's den. Hasten, Knight Raiko, and kill the demons! I already feel that I am saved!"

When they heard these words the warriors knew that she was one of the goblin's victims. The Princess turned and led the way up the hill. Presently they saw a large iron gate guarded by two demons. The demon on the right was red and the demon on the left was black, and each was armed with a great iron stick or club. The Princess whispered to Raiko: "Behold the home of the demon. Enter the gates, and you will find a beautiful palace, built of black iron

from the foundations to the roof. It is therefore called the Palace of Black Iron or Kurogane. It is large, and the inside is as beautiful as a great Daimio's palace. Within the walls of the Palace of Black Iron, Shutendoji holds a feast night and day. He is waited upon by maidens such as I, whom he has carried off from the capital and from the provinces to be his slaves. The wine he drinks, poured out in crimson lacquer cups, is the blood of human beings, and the food of those feasts is the flesh of his victims who are slain in turn. What numbers have I seen disappear, alas! all murdered to supply the awful food and wine of those cannibal feasts. How I have prayed to Heaven to punish this monster! But when I saw the fate of my friends, how could I hope to live? I knew not when my turn would come. But since I have met you I feel that we shall all be saved and great is my joy and gratitude!"

By this time they had reached the gate, and the Princess went forward and said to the red and black demon sentinels: "These poor travellers have lost their way on this mountain. I took compassion on them and brought them here, so that they may rest for a while before going on their journey. I hope you will be kind to them."

When the Princess first began to speak the demons looked and saw Raiko and his fellow priests. Little dreaming who these men were, and

that in admitting them they were letting in the bravest knights in the whole of Japan, and still less suspecting their purpose, the demons laughed in their hearts. Good prey had indeed fallen into their hands; they would surely be allowed a share in the feast that these fresh victims would furnish.

They grinned from ear to ear at the Princess and told her that she had done well, and bade her take the six travellers into the Palace and inform Shutendoji of their arrival. Thus the six warriors entered into the very stronghold of the demons as if they were invited guests. Triumphant glee at the success of their plan made them exchange lightning glances with each other. They passed through the great iron gate, up to the porch, and then the Princess led them through large spacious rooms and along great corridors till at last they reached the inner part of the Palace. Here they were shown into a large hall. At the upper end in the seat of honour sat the demon king Shutendoji. Never had the knights in their wildest dreams dreamt of such a hideous monster. He was ten feet in height, his skin was bright red and his wild shock of hair was like a broom. He wore a crimson *hakama*,[1] and he rested his huge arms on a stand. As the knights entered, he glared at them fiercely with eyes as big as a dish. The sight

[1] *Hakama*, a divided skirt, part of the Japanese costume.

of this dread monster was enough to make any one tremble with fear, and had Raiko and his knights been weak they must have fainted away with horror.

Raiko could hardly restrain himself from flying at the monster then and there, but he controlled himself and bowed humbly so as not to awaken the enemy's suspicion in any way.

Shutendoji, glaring at him, said haughtily: "I do not know who you are in the least, or how you have found your way into this mountain, but make yourself at home!"

Then Raiko answered meekly: "We are only humble mountain priests from Mount Haguro of Dewa. We were on our way to the capital, having been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Omine. In travelling across these mountains we have lost our way. While wandering about and wondering which was the right path to take, we were met by one of the inmates of your palace and kindly brought here. Please pardon us for trespassing on your domains and for all the trouble we are giving you!"

"Don't mention it," said Shutendoji; "I am sorry to hear of your plight. Do not stand on ceremony while you are here, and let us feast together." Then turning to the attendant demons he shouted orders for the dinner to be served, and clapped his red hands together.

At this the partitions between the rooms slid apart and beautiful damsels magnificently robed came gliding in, bearing aloft in their hands large wine-cups, jars of *saké*, and dishes of fish of all kinds, which they placed before the ugly goblin and the guests. Raiko knew that all these lovely princesses had been snatched from the Flower Capital by Shutendoji, who, heedless of their tears and misery, kept them here to be his handmaidens. He said to himself fiercely that they should soon be free.

Now that the wine-cups were brought in, the warrior seized his opportunity. From his satchel he took out the jar containing the enchanted wine, Shimben-Kidoku-Shu, which he had received from the gods of the three shrines, and said to Shutendoji: "Here is some wine which we have brought from Mount Haguro. It is a poor wine and unworthy of your acceptance, but we have always found it of great benefit in refreshing us when we were weary from fatigue and in cheering our drooping spirits. It will give us much pleasure if you will try a little of our humble wine, though it may not please your taste!"

Shutendoji seemed pleased at this courtesy. He handed out a huge cup to be filled, saying: "Give me some of your wine. I should like to try it."

The goblin drained it at one swallow and smacked his lips over it.

"I have never tasted such excellent wine," he said and held out his cup to be filled again.

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You can imagine how delighted Raiko was, for he knew full well that the demon was given into his hand. But he dissembled cleverly and said as he filled the goblin's wine-cup: "I am delighted that the Honourable Host should deign to like our poor country wine. While you drink, I and my companions will venture to amuse you by our dancing."

Then Raiko made a sign to his men and they began to chant an accompaniment, while he himself danced.

Shutendoji was highly amused as well as his attendants. They had never seen men dance before, and they thought that the strangers were very entertaining.

The goblins now began to pass the magic wine round and to grow merry. Others meanwhile whispered among themselves, pitying the six travellers who, all unconscious of the horrible fate which was about to overtake them, were spending their last hours of liberty and probably of life in giving wine to their slayers and in dancing and singing for their amusement!

Already, however, the power of the enchanted wine had begun to work and Shutendoji grew drowsy. The wine in the jar never seemed to grow less, however much was taken from it, and

by this time all the demons had helped themselves liberally. At last they all fell into a deep sleep, and stretching themselves out on the floor and on one another, some in one corner and some in another, they were soon snoring so loudly that the room shook, and were as insensible to all that was going on as logs of wood.

"The time has come!" said Raiko, springing to his feet, and motioning to his men to get to work. One and all hastily opened their knapsacks. Taking out their helmets, their armour, and their long swords, they armed themselves. When they were all ready they all knelt down, and, placing their hands palm to palm, they prayed fervently to their patron gods to help them now in their hour of greatest need and peril.

As they prayed, a shining light filled the room, and in a radiant cloud the three deities appeared again. "Fear not, Warrior Raiko," they said. "We have tied the hands and feet of the demon fast, so you have nothing to fear. While your knights cut off his limbs, do you cut off his head; then kill the rest of the *oni* and your work will be done."

The three old men then disappeared as mysteriously as they had come.

Raiko rejoiced at the vision and worshipped with his heart full of gratitude the vanishing deities. The knights then rose from their knees, took their swords and wet the rivets with water, so as

to fix the blade firmly in the hilt. Then they all stole stealthily and cautiously towards Shutendoji. No longer the timid mountain priests; clad in full armour, they were transformed into avenging warriors. With flashing eyes and dauntless mien they moved across the room.

The captive princesses standing round realized that these men were deliverers, from their beloved capital. Their joy and wonder cannot be put into words. Some cried aloud with joy; others covered their faces with their sleeves and burst into soft weeping; others raised their hands to Heaven and exclaimed, "A Buddha come to Hell! Surely these brave men will kill the demons and set us free"; and with clasped hands they entreated the knights to slay their captors and take them back to their homes.

Now Raiko stood over the sleeping Shutendoji with drawn sword, and raising it on high with a mighty sweep he aimed at the demon's neck, which was as big round as a barrel.

The head was severed from the body at one blow, but, horrible to relate, instead of falling to the ground, it flew up into the air in a great rage. It hung over Raiko for a moment snorting flames of fire, and then swooped down as if it would bite off the warrior's head, but it was daunted by the glittering star on his helmet, and drew back and gazed in surprise at the transformed man. Raiko was scorched by the demon's flaming breath. Once

more he raised his long sword and striking the terrible head brought it to the ground at last.

The noise of the combat and the triumphant shouts of the warriors awoke the other demons, who roused themselves as quickly as their stupefied senses allowed them. They were in a great fright, and without waiting to get their iron clubs, they made a rush upon Raiko. But they were too late. His five braves dashed in and attacked them right and left, until in a few minutes there was not one left to tell the tale of the destruction which had come down upon them like the autumn whirlwind upon the leaves of the forest glades.

The captive princesses, when they saw that their captors were all slain, jumped about with gladness, waving their long sleeves to and fro, as the tears of joy streamed down their pale faces. They ran to Raiko and caught hold of his sleeves and praised him, saying: "Oh! Raiko Sama, what a brave and noble knight you are! We are indeed grateful to you for having saved our lives. Never have we seen such a wonderful warrior." And with many such expressions of joy they gathered round the knight, and their merry voices were now heard, instead of the groans of the dying cannibals.

Now that Shutendoji was vanquished with all his horde, the way was quite open for Raiko and his men to take the fair captives away from the castle

THE HEAD FLEW UP INTO THE AIR

of horror and make their way back to the capital as soon as possible.

First of all Raiko tied up the head of Shutendoji with a strong rope and told the five brave knights to carry it. Then, followed by the princesses, the little band left Mount Oye forever and set out on the homeward journey. When they reached Kyoto the news of Raiko's return spread like fire, and the people came out in crowds to welcome the heroes.

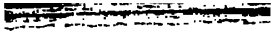
When the parents of the long-lost damsels saw their daughters again, they felt as if they must be dreaming. It seemed too good to be true that the dear and cherished ones should be restored to them safe and well, and they overwhelmed Raiko with praise and with precious gifts.

Raiko took the head of Shutendoji to the Emperor and told him of all that had happened to him. You may be sure that when His Majesty heard of the success which had crowned Raiko and his expedition, he awarded him great praise and merit and bestowed upon him higher Court rank than ever.

In all the country, far and near, Raiko's name was in every one's mouth, and he was acknowledged to be the greatest warrior in the land. Even in the lonely country places there was not one poor farmer who did not know of the brave deeds of the great general.

Ever since then his portrait is familiar to the boys of Japan, for it is often painted on their kites.

KIDOMARU THE ROBBER, RAIKO THE BRAVE, AND THE GOBLIN SPIDER



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KIDOMARU THE ROBBER, RAIKO THE BRAVE, AND THE GOBLIN SPIDER

YOU have just read of the brave knight Raiko's exploits at Oyeyama and how he rid the country of the demons who haunted the city of Kyoto and terrified the inhabitants of the Flower Capital (as that city was sometimes called) by their terrible deeds.

There are other interesting stories about him and his fearless warrior-retainers which you may like to hear.

It was not long after Raiko's exploits at Oyeyama that the country rang with the name of Kidomaru, a robber and highwayman, who, by his notorious deeds of cruelty and robbery, had caused his name to be feared and hated by all, both young and old.

One evening Raiko with his attendants was returning home from a day's hunting, when he happened to pass the house of his younger brother Yorinobu. The warrior had had a long day out; and having still a good distance to ride before he

would reach his own house the thought of a good meal and friendly company, just then, when he was tired and very hungry, was pleasant to contemplate in the lonely hour of twilight. So he called a halt outside the house and sent in word to his brother that he, Raiko, was passing by, and that if Yorinobu had any refreshment to offer his brother, he would call in and stay the night there, as he was tired out on his way back from a day's hunt.

Now in Japan an elder brother or sister commands respect from the younger members of the family, and so Yorinobu was very pleased that Raiko, his elder brother, had condescended to call upon him.

The servant soon returned with the message that Yorinobu was only too pleased to receive Raiko; that he had ordered a feast to be prepared that evening in honour of an unusual event, and as he was alone, nothing could be more opportune or give him greater joy than that his elder brother should have chanced to come by. He humbly begged Raiko that he would deign to share the feast, such as it was, and to pardon the poorness of his hospitality.

Raiko was very pleased with his brother's gracious reception. He quickly flung the reins to his groom, dismounted from his horse, and entered the house, wondering what could be the occasion of Yorinobu's ordering a banquet for himself. When

the warrior was shown into the room he found Yorinobu seated on the mats drinking *saké*, as the servants were bringing in the first dishes of the dinner. When the salutations were over, Yorinobu handed Raiko his wine-cup. Raiko took it, and having drained it, asked what his brother meant by the feast he had promised him and what was the occasion of it. Yorinobu laughed as if with triumph, and wheeling round on his cushion pointed out into the garden.

Raiko then looked in the direction indicated by his brother's hand, and saw, tied up to a large pine tree, a young man who could not be much over thirty and of extraordinary strength. The face of the captive expressed hate and ferocity, his body was of an enormous build, while his arms and legs were like trunks of pine trees, so large and brown and muscular were they. His hair was a rough and matted shock, and the eyes glared as if they would start from their sockets. Indeed to Raiko the wild creature looked more like a demon than a human being.

"Well, Yorinobu!" said Raiko, "the occasion of your feast is to say the least unusual; it must certainly have given you some sport to catch that wild creature; but tell me who he is that you have got tied up out there."

"Have you not heard of Kidomaru, the notorious robber?" answered Yorinobu. "There he is!

One of my men captured him out on the hills; he found him asleep. The town has long been clamouring for him. He has a big score to settle at last. For to-night I intend to keep him tied up like that, and to-morrow I shall hand him over to the law! Come, let us be merry, for the dinner is served!"

Raiko clapped his hands when he heard of the great feat Yorinobu and his men had accomplished in catching the fearful robber, the terror of whose lawless deeds had long held the people of Kyoto trembling with fear and dread. The outlaw Kidomaru was caught at last and by his own brother Yorinobu! This was an event of rejoicing and congratulation for the family.

"You have certainly done a meritorious service to your country," said he, "but it is ridiculous to tie such a creature up with a rope only. You might just as well think of tying up a wild cow with a fine kite-string. It would be less dangerous. Take my advice, Yorinobu, put a strong iron chain round him, or the murderer will soon be at large again."

Yorinobu thought his brother's advice wise, so he clapped his hands. When the servant came to answer the summons, he ordered him to bring an iron chain. When this was brought, he went into the garden, followed by Raiko and his men, and wound it round Kidomaru's body several times, securing it at last to a post with a padlock.

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Kidomaru up to this time had rejoiced at his light bonds. He was so strong that he knew he could easily break a rope, and he had waited but for the nightfall to make good his escape under cover of the darkness. You can imagine how great was his anger at Raiko's interference, which was the cause of his being treated with so much severity that his projected escape would now be difficult.

"Hateful man!" muttered Kidomaru to himself. "I will surely punish you for what you have done to me! Remember!" and he threw evil glances at Raiko.

But the brave warrior cared little for the wild robber's malignant glances; he only laughed when he noticed them, and, as the chain was drawn tighter round the robber, he said: "That's right! That chain will hold him sure enough! You must run no risk of his escaping this time!"

Then he and Yorinobu returned to the house, and dinner was served and the two brothers made merry the whole evening, talking over old times, and it was late before they retired to rest.

Now Kidomaru knew that Raiko slept in Yorinobu's house, and he made up his mind to try to slay him that night, for he was mad with wrath at what Raiko had done to him.

"He shall see what I can do!" growled Kidomaru to himself, shaking his rough and shaggy head like a big long-haired terrier. He waited

quietly till every one in the house had gone to rest and all was silent. Then Kidomaru arose, cramped and stiff from sitting tied up so long. With a mighty effort he flung out his great arms, laughing defiance at the chain that bound him. So great was his strength that no second effort was needed; the chain broke and fell clanking to the ground at once, and Kidomaru, like a large hound, shook himself free from his bonds. Softly as a mouse he approached the house and climbed on to the roof, and with one tremendous blow from his huge fist, he broke through the tiles and the boards to the ceiling. His plan was to jump down upon Raiko while he lay sleeping, and taking him unawares suddenly to cut off his head. But the warrior had lain down to rest expecting such an attack, and he had slept but lightly. As soon as he heard the noise above him, he was wide awake in an instant, and to warn his enemy he coughed and cleared his throat. Kidomaru was a man of fierce and dauntless character, and he was not in the least thrown back in his purpose by finding that Raiko was awake. He went on with his work of making a hole large enough in the ceiling to let himself through to the room beneath.

Raiko now sat up and clapped his hands loudly to summon his men, who slept in an adjoining room. Watanabe, the chief man-at-arms, came out to see what his master wanted.

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"Watanabe," said Raiko, "my sleep has been disturbed by something moving in the ceiling. It may be a weasel, for weasels are noisy creatures. It cannot be a rat, for a rat is not large enough to make so much noise. At any rate, it seems impossible to sleep to-night, so saddle the horses and get all the men ready to start. I will get up and ride out to the Temple of Mount Kurama. I want all the men to accompany me."

Perched between the roof and the ceiling, the robber heard all this, and said to himself: "What ho! Raiko goes to Kurama! That is good news! Instead of wasting my time here like a rat in a trap, I will set out for Kurama immediately and get there before those stupid men can, and I will waylay them and kill them all." So Kidomaru crawled out on the roof again, let himself down to the ground, and hurried with all the speed he could make to Kurama.

A large plain had to be crossed in going from the city to Kurama, and here a number of wild cattle had their home. When Kidomaru, on his way to Kurama, came to this spot, a plan flashed across his mind by which he could steal a march on Raiko. He soon caught one of the big oxen a blow on the head. Three blows one after the other, and the ox fell dead at the robber's feet. Kidomaru then proceeded to strip off its skin. It was very hard work, but he managed to do it quickly,

so strong was he, and then throwing the hide over himself he lay down completely disguised, a man in a bull's hide, and waited for Raiko and his men to come.

He had not long to wait. Raiko, followed by his four braves, soon came in sight. The warrior reined in his horse when he came to the plain and saw the cattle. He turned to his men and said: "Here is a place where we may find some sport. Instead of going on to Kurama, let us stay here and have some hunting! Look at the wild cattle!"

The four retainers with one accord all gladly agreed to their chief's proposal, for they loved sport and adventure just as much as Raiko and were glad of an excuse to show their skill as huntsmen. The sun was just rising, and the prospect of a fine morning added zest to the pastime. Each man prepared his bow and arrows in readiness to begin the chase.

But the cattle, thus disturbed, did not enjoy the sport. Man's play was their death indeed. One of their number had been killed by Kidomaru, and now they were attacked by Raiko and his men, who came riding furiously into their midst, shooting at them with bows and arrows. With angry snorts, whisking their tails on high and butting with their horns, they ran to right and left. In the general stampede that followed their attack, the hunters noticed that one animal lay still in the

tall grass. At first they thought it must be either lame or ill, so they took no notice of it, and left it alone till Raiko came riding up. He went up and looked at it carefully, and then ordered one of his men to shoot it.

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The man obeyed, and taking his bow, shot an arrow at the recumbent animal. The arrow did not hit the mark; for, to the astonishment of the four hunters, the hide was flung aside and out stepped the robber Kidomaru.

"You, Raiko! It is you, is it?" exclaimed he. "Do you know that I have a spite against you?" and with these words he darted forward and attacked Raiko with a dagger. But Raiko did not even move in his saddle. He drew his sword and, adroitly guarding himself, exchanged two or three strokes with the robber, and then slashed off his head. But wonderful to relate, so strong was the will that animated Kidomaru that though his head was cut off, his body stood up straight and firm till his right arm, still holding the dagger, struck at Raiko's saddle. Then, and not till then, it collapsed. It is said that the warriors were all greatly impressed by the malevolent spirit of the robber, which was strong enough to stir the body to action even after the head had been severed from the shoulders.

Such was the death of the notorious robber Kidomaru, at the hands of the brave warrior Raiko

who was awarded much praise for the clever way in which he drew Kidomaru out as far as Kurama to kill him. He had understood from Kidomaru's evil glances that the robber planned to kill him, and he thus avoided causing trouble in his brother's house. In this instance, as always, Raiko displayed wisdom and bravery.

No sooner, however, was Kidomaru killed, than news was brought to the capital that another man had arisen who imitated Kidomaru in his daily deeds of robbery and other wicked acts. This robber's name was Kakamadare.

One bright moonlight night, Kakamadare was waiting on the plain between Kyoto and Kurama for travellers to come that way, hoping that luck would bring some rich man into his clutches. Presently he heard some one coming towards him playing on a flute. Thinking this somewhat strange, he hid himself in the grass and waited to see who would appear. The sweet music drew nearer and nearer, and then the player came in view. The light of the moon made everything as clear as day, and the robber saw a handsome *samurai* of soldierly aspect, dressed in beautiful silken robes and wearing a long sword at his side.

"Now 's my opportunity ; I 'm in luck to-night," thought the robber, as he rose from his hiding-place and stealthily followed the flute-player. As he kept step by step behind him, Kakamadare

drew his sword in readiness several times to cut down his prey, and waited for the chance to strike.

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All at once the *samurai* turned and looked steadily at the robber, who began to tremble. Then the knight calmly and coolly resumed his playing, as if utterly indifferent to the danger which threatened him. Once more the robber followed, with the intention of cutting the man down, but the opportunity for which he waited never came; each time his hand went up with his sword, it as quickly fell to his side. A spirit of high and noble purpose seemed to emanate from the knight, which cowed the man behind and made him weak. For so great is the virtue of the sword that in Japan it is an acknowledged fact that all noble swordsmen had this power of subduing lesser natures by the spiritual grace which went forth from them. Indeed the belief in the occult power of the sword was great, and it was said that no bad man could keep the possession of a fine blade.

Kakamadare could not strike. He could not tell the cause of his weakness. He thought that it might be the influence of the music. He found himself listening to the gentle strains of the flute, and admiring the skill with which the man played. He noticed the firm and fearless air of the knight as he walked and his great nerve. The man knew himself to be followed by a robber, yet he showed not the least concern. Kakamadare tried to turn

back now, but he found that he could do nothing but follow the man in front of him. In this way the strange pair reached the town. Kakamadare now made a great effort to break the spell, and was on the point of turning back and trying to escape from the strange, compelling presence, when to his astonishment the *samurai* suddenly wheeled round upon him and said: "Kakamadare, I thank you for your trouble! You have given me a safe escort!"

At this the robber became so terrified that he fell down on his knees and was unable to move or speak for some moments. At last, so soon as his tongue found utterance, he said: "I know not who you are, but I beg you to forgive me! I would have killed you!"

He then confessed everything to the knight. He told him of his many deeds of robbery and violence which had made him feared and hated by the people, who thought that he must be a demon, for so cruel and relentless was he that he never showed mercy even to the poorest peasant. "I have never met any one like you," Kakamadare went on to say. "I promise to give up my life as a robber, and I beg you to take me into your service as one of the humblest of your retainers."

The knight led the man home, and gave him some good clothes, telling him that when he again got into straits and wanted money or clothes, he

might come a second time to the house, but that it was unwise to show such contempt for others as to enter into an encounter where he himself might be the injured party.

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This kindness and mercy touched the man's heart, and from that day he became a reformed man and a law-abiding citizen.

The knight was none other than Hirai, one of the warriors who accompanied Raiko in his successful expedition against the demons of Oyeyama. There is a saying that "Brave generals make brave soldiers," and it is quite true. Raiko was a man of great sagacity and courage, and his band of braves and the knight Hirai, of whom we have just read, were like their master. There were no men in the whole of Japan braver than they. This proves the truth of the old adage.

There is another story about the General Raiko which you may like to hear. The sword with which Raiko slew Kidomaru was called the *Kumokiri*, or Spider-cutting Sword, and about the naming of this blade there is an interesting story.

It happened at one time that Raiko was unwell and was obliged to keep his room. Every night at about twelve a little acolyte would come to his bedside, and in a kind and gentle way pour out and give him some medicine to take. Raiko noticed that he did not know the boy, but as there were many underlings in the servants' quarters whom

he never saw, this did not strike him as strange. But Raiko, instead of recovering, found himself growing weaker and weaker, and especially after taking the medicine he always felt worse.

At last one day he spoke to his head servant and asked him who it was that brought him medicine every night, but the attendant answered that he knew nothing about the medicine and that there was no acolyte in the house.

Raiko now suspected some supernatural snare. "Some malevolent being is taking advantage of my illness and trying to bewitch me or to cause my death. When the boy comes again to-night I will find out his real form. He may be a fox or goblin in disguise!" said Raiko.

So he waited for the appearance of the acolyte, wondering what the strange incident could mean.

When midnight came, the boy, as usual, appeared, bringing with him the usual cup of medicine. The knight calmly took the cup from the boy and said, "Thank you for your trouble!" but instead of swallowing the false medicine, he threw it, cup and all, at the boy's head. Then jumping up he seized the sword that lay beside his bed and cut at the impostor. As the blade fell, the acolyte screamed with rage and pain, then, with a movement as quick as lightning, before he turned to escape from the room, he threw something at the knight, which, marvellous to relate, as he threw, spread outwards pyramid-

ically into a large white sticky web which fell over Raiko and clung to him so that he could hardly move. Raiko whirled his sword round and cut the clinging meshes and freed himself; again the goblin threw a web over him, and again Raiko cut the enmeshing threads away; once more the huge spider's web — for such it was — was thrown over him, and then the goblin fled. Raiko called for his men and then sank exhausted on his bed.

His chief retainer, answering the summons, met the acolyte in the corridor, and thinking it strange that an unknown priest, however young, should come from his master's room at that hour of the night, stopped him with drawn sword.

The goblin answered not a word, but threw his entangling web over the man and mysteriously disappeared.

Now thoroughly alarmed, the retainer hastened to Raiko. Great was his consternation when he saw his master, with the meshes of the goblin's web still clinging to him.

"See!" exclaimed Raiko, pointing to the threads still clinging to his man and himself, "a goblin spider has been here!"

He then gave orders to hunt down the goblin, but the thing could nowhere be found. On the white mats and along the corridors they found as they searched red drops of blood, which showed that the creature had been wounded.

Raiko's men followed the red trail, out into the garden, across the city to the hills, till they came to a cave, and here the blood-drops ceased. Groans and cries of pain issued from the cave, so the warriors felt sure that they had come to the end of their hunt.

"The goblin is surely hiding in that cave!" they all said. Drawing their swords, they entered the cave and found a monster spider writhing with pain and bleeding from a deep sword-cut on the head. They at once killed the creature and carried it to Raiko.

The knight had often heard stories of these dreadful spiders, but had never seen one before.

"It was this goblin spider then that wanted to prey upon me! The net that was thrown over me was a spider's web! Of all my adventures this is the strangest!" said Raiko.

That night Raiko ordered a banquet to be prepared for all his retainers in honour of the event, and he drank to the health of his five brave men.

From that time the acolyte never appeared and Raiko recovered his health and strength at once.

Such is the story of the *Kumokiri* Sword. *Kumo* means "spider," and *kiri* means "cutting," and it was so named because it cut to death the goblin spider who haunted the brave knight Raiko.

THEY ENTERED THE CAVE AND FOUND A MONSTER SPIDER

THE STORY OF THE POTS OF PLUM, CHERRY, AND PINE

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THE STORY OF THE POTS OF PLUM, CHERRY, AND PINE

LONG, long ago, in the reign of the Emperor Go-Fukakusa, there lived a famous Regent of the name of Saimyoji Tokiyori. Of all the Hojo Regents he was the wisest and justest, and was known far and wide among the people for his deeds of mercy. At the age of thirty, Tokiyori resigned the regency in favour of his son Tokimune, who was only six years old. He then retired to a monastery for several years. Sometimes stories reached his ears of the miscarriage of justice, of the cruelty of the officials under him, and of the suffering of the peasants, and he determined to find out for himself if all these things were true. It was the desire of his life to see the people governed wisely and justly and impartially, to deal reward and punishment fairly alike to the rich and the poor, to the great and the lowly. After much thought he decided that the best way to achieve his end would be to find out for himself the condition of the people, so he determined that he would disguise himself and travel about amongst

them unknown. He had it given out that he was dead, and had a mock funeral performed with all the pomp and ceremony due to his exalted rank. He then left Kamakura disguised as a travelling priest unknown to any one.

After journeying from place to place, he came one day to Sano, in the province of Kozuki. It was in the depth of winter, and on this day he found himself overtaken by a heavy snowstorm. There were no houses near. Tokiyori then ascended a hill, but even from that height, search as he might, he could see no sign of any dwelling, near or far. Confused and lost, he wandered about for hours. The darkness began to fall when he found himself in a hilly district. Tired and hungry, he resigned himself to passing the night under the shelter of a tree, when suddenly he espied in the distance the brown line of a thatch-roofed cottage breaking the white slope at the foot of the nearest hill. He made his way quickly towards it and knocked at the closed storm-doors.

Tokiyori heard some one move within and then come to the porch. The storm-shutter was pushed aside and a beautiful woman looked out.

"I have lost my way in the storm, and know not what to do! Will you be so kind as to give me the shelter of your roof this night?" said Tokiyori.

The woman scanned the traveller from head to foot. Then she said: "I am very sorry for you. I

would willingly give you shelter, but my husband being absent I must not let you in. You had better go on to the next village of Yamamoto, which is very near, and there you will find a good inn and accommodation for travellers!"

"You are right," answered Tokiyori; "but alas! I am so tired that I can walk no more. For pity's sake, let me sleep on the verandah or in your storehouse; for so much shelter I shall be grateful."

"I am indeed sorry to refuse you," answered the woman; "but in the absence of my husband I must not give shelter to a strange traveller. Were he at home, he would with pleasure take you in and give you lodging for the night. Try to make your way to the next village."

Tokiyori, greatly impressed by her virtuous and modest behaviour, bowed and said as he took his leave: "There is no help for it! I must try to reach Yamamoto, since you cannot shelter me tonight."

So the ex-Regent of Kamakura, spent and cold and hungry, turned once more to meet the inclement weather. He took the direction pointed out to him and plodded on through the snow. But alas! the storm had increased in violence, and the snow fell faster and faster, and the wind howled across the white drifts, whirling clouds of snow in his face till at last he found it impossible to go on. He stood still in the storm, not knowing what to do.

Exerting all his strength, he found it difficult to put one foot before the other. Just as he began to give himself up for lost, he heard a voice calling him from behind.

"Stop! stop!" at first faintly, then gradually the cries grew nearer and more distinct.

Wondering who else could be out in such merciless weather, Tokiyori turned in the direction whence the cries came and saw a man beckoning to him to turn back.

"Are you calling me?" asked Tokiyori.

"Yes indeed," replied the man; "I am the husband of the woman who turned you away from that cottage just now. I regret that I was not at home to offer you the poor hospitality that is all I have to give. Please turn back with me. I can at least give you shelter for the night, though my house is only a small hut. You will be frozen to death if you go on in this storm."

The priest rejoiced when he heard these kind words, and as he turned back with his host he uttered many words of thanks. When they entered the porch, the woman whom he had already seen came forward and welcomed the stranger cordially, apologizing for her former behaviour.

"I pray you pardon me," she said, bowing to the ground, "for my rude words a short time ago; but now that my husband has returned I hope you will pass the night under our humble

roof. I beg you not to be angry with me, knowing the custom of these times."

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"Don't mention it, my good woman," replied the priest in disguise. "It was quite right of you to refuse me admittance in your husband's absence. I admire your prudent conduct."

While the priest and the hostess were thus exchanging civilities, her husband had entered the little sitting-room and arranged some cotton cushions on the mat. Having done this, he came out to usher in the guest.

"Thank you," answered the priest, taking off his snow-covered hat and rain-coat; and, slipping his feet out of the sandals, he entered the house.

The host turned again to his guest and said: "Now, as you see, I am a very poor man and I cannot give you a good dinner such as the rich can offer, but to our coarse, simple fare, such as it is, you are very welcome."

The priest bowed to the ground and said that he would be grateful for any food that would stay his hunger; he had walked all day in the cold and had eaten nothing since breaking his fast in the early morning.

Meanwhile the wife busied herself in the kitchen, and as it was now the hour of sunset, the meal was soon ready to be served. The priest noticed that millet instead of rice filled the bowls, and that

there was not a sign of fish in the soup, which was made of vegetables only. The disguised ex-Regent had never eaten such coarse food in his life before, for millet is the poorest peasant's fare; but "Hunger needs no sauce," says the proverb, and so Tokiyori was surprised to find with how great a relish he could eat what was set before him, for he was ravenously hungry. Never had food tasted so sweet to him before. He long remembered the sensation of pleasant surprise as he partook of the first mouthful. The good wife waited on them during the meal, according to Japanese custom.

When supper was over, they all sat round the hearth, talking of the good old times and telling each other amusing stories to while away the time. The hours flew quickly by and it was midnight before the host and his guest knew it. The fire had burned very low without their noticing it, and they began to shiver with cold. The host turned to the fuel-box, but all the charcoal and wood had been burned up. Then the host arose, and, regardless of the falling snow and the bitter cold, went into the garden and brought thence three pots of dwarfed trees, for the training of which Japanese gardeners are famous all the world over.

"On such a winter's night a good fire is necessary for the entertainment of a traveller, but, alas! all the charcoal has been used up and I have no

more in the house. To warm you before you retire I will therefore burn these trees!"

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"What!" said the astonished guest, for he saw that the trees were of no common kind, but were of some value, for they were old, and their training showed the skill of an experienced gardener; "these pine, plum, and cherry trees are too good to be used as fuel — they are finely trained. No! no! you must n't burn them for me — they are far too valuable!"

"Don't trouble yourself," said the host. "I loved them once when I was rich and had many more such valuable trees in my possession. But now that I am ruined and living in this miserable condition, of what use are such trees to me, pray tell me?" and with these words he began to break up the trees and to put the pieces on the fire. "If they could speak, I am sure they would say how pleased they were to be used for such a good purpose as your comfort!"

The disguised ex-Regent smiled as he watched the kind man break up his pet trees, and make up the fire. Since Tokiyori had first entered the house, small and poverty-stricken though it was, he had felt that his host was no common farmer as he pretended to be; that he must be a man in reduced circumstances.

"I feel sure," said the priest, "that you are no farmer by birth; indeed in you I recognize the

courtesy and breeding of a *samurai* [a knight]. Will you add one more favour to the rest you have shown me this night and tell me your real name?"

"Alas," answered the farmer in disguise, "I cannot do so without shame."

"Do not trifle with me," said the priest, "for I am very much in earnest. Tell me who you are. I should very much like to know."

Pressed so earnestly to reveal himself, the host could no longer refuse.

"Since you wish so earnestly to know, I will tell who I am, without reserve," he answered. "I am no farmer, as you rightly guessed. I am in reality a *samurai*, and my name is Sano Genzaemon Tsuneyo."

"Indeed? Are you Sano Genzaemon Tsuneyo? I have heard of you. You are a *samurai* of high rank, I know. But tell me, how is it that you are now in such reduced circumstances?"

"Oh, that is a long story," replied Sano. "It was through the dishonesty of an unworthy relation. He seized my property, little by little, without my knowing it, and one day I found that he had taken everything and that I was left with nothing except this farmhouse and the land on which it stands."

"I am sorry for you," said Tokiyori; "but why have n't you brought a lawsuit against your relation? Were you to do that, I am sure you would recover your lost property."

"Oh yes, I have thought of that," said the farmer; "but now that Tokiyori, the just Regent, has died, and as Tokimune his successor is very young, I felt that it was useless to present my petition, so that I determined to resign myself to poverty. But though I live and work like a farmer, in heart and soul I am still a *samurai*. Should war break out or even a call to arms be sounded, I shall be the first to go to Kamakura, wearing my armour, dilapidated and torn though it may be, carrying my halberd, rusty as it is, and riding my old horse, emaciated and unpresentable though he is, and I will do glorious deeds once more and die a knight's death. I never for one moment forget my ambition. This alone buoys me up through all my trouble and poverty," he added cheerfully, looking up at his listener with a smile.

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"Your purpose is a good one, and worthy of a true *samurai*," said the priest, and he smiled and looked at the knight intently. "I prophesy that you will rise in life in the near future, and I feel sure that I shall see you and congratulate you at Kamakura on obtaining your heart's desire."

While they were talking, the night had passed and day began to break. The snow had ceased to fall, and as Sano and his guest rose to open the storm-doors, the sun rose bright and shining on a silvered world.

The priest went to put on his rain-coat and hat.

"Thank you," he said, "for all the kindness and hospitality you have shown me. I will say good-bye. Now that the storm has ceased, I need trespass no longer on your goodness; I will be getting on my way!"

"Oh," said the knight, "why need you hurry so? At least stay one more day with us, for you seem to me no longer a stranger but a friend, and I am loth to see you depart."

"Thank you," replied the priest, "but I must hurry on. I take my leave, however, with the firm conviction that fate will give us the pleasure of meeting again ere long. Remember my words. Good-bye!" And thus speaking, with several bows the priest turned from the porch and wended his way through the snow.

When he had gone the knight remembered that he had forgotten to ask the traveller's name, so he and his wife would probably never know who the sympathetic stranger was.

The next spring the Government at Kamakura issued a proclamation calling upon all knights to present themselves in battle-array before the Regent. When Sano Genzaemon heard of this, he thought that some extraordinary event must have taken place. What it was he could not imagine. But he was a knight and must answer the summons promptly. Here might be the chance of proving his knightly prowess, for which he had

been waiting so long, hidden away in obscurity and the poverty of his circumstances. The only thing that weighed him down was the thought that he had no money either to buy a new suit of armour or a good horse. No hesitation, however, showed itself in the despatch with which he hastened to Kamakura, clothed only in his suit of shabby armour, a rusty halberd in hand, and riding an old broken-down horse, unattended by any servant.

When Sano reached Kamakura, he found the city crowded with warriors who were riding in from all parts of the country. There were thousands of great and eminent *samurai* clothed from head to foot in beautiful armour, their suits, their helmets, and their swords glittering with ornamentation of silver and gold. It was a goodly sight that the sun shone on that day, framed by the great pine trees against the background of the glimmering sea beyond. The pride of life and race were there, the hauteur of birth and rank, the glory and parade of war, the glinting of helmet and clanking of steel, — every knight's armour was composed of fine metal scales woven and held together by silken threads of ruby, emerald, scarlet, sapphire, and gold. Each knight wore his favourite colour, and as the ranks moved into the sunlight or fell into the shade the whole formed an army of moving splendour, the brilliant and varie-

gated colouring of which was like a river of rich and magnificent brocade.

As Sano, clothed in his shabby armour and riding his broken-down horse, rode in amongst the bright phalanx of warriors, how they all jeered and scoffed at him and his horse! But Sano cared little for their scorn, the consciousness that he was a *samurai* as good as most of them bore him up, and he laughed to himself at their pride and swagger.

"These men wear fine armour, it is true," he said to himself, "but they have lost the true *samurai* spirit; their hearts are corrupt or they would not glory so in appearance; though my armour cannot compare with theirs, yet in loyalty I can never be outdone, even by them, braggers though they be."

As these thoughts passed through his mind, Sano saw a herald approaching the gay concourse of knights. He rode a richly caparisoned horse, and he held aloft a banner bearing the house-crest of the Regent. The warriors, their armour and their swords clanging as they moved, parted to the right and left, leaving a road for him to pass. As he rode up their lines he called aloud: "The Regent summons to his presence the knight who wears the shabbiest armour and who rides the most broken-down horse!"

When Sano heard these words he thought:

"There is no soldier here but myself clothed in old armour. Alas! the Governor will reprimand me for daring to appear in such a state. It can't be helped; come what will, I obey the summons — such is my duty!"

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So with a sinking heart Sano, the dilapidated knight, followed the herald to the Governor's house. Here the messenger announced that the knight Sano Genzaemon had come in answer to the proclamation summoning the poorest-clothed knight to the Regent.

"I am the poorest knight here, so the required man can be none other than myself," said Sano, as he bowed low to the retainers who came out to receive him at the porch.

Sano was then ushered along endless corridors and through spacious rooms. At last the ushering officer knelt on the polished wood outside a large room, and, pushing back the white paper screen, told him to enter. The knight found himself in the presence of the handsome young General Tokimune. On his head he wore a helmet with golden horns and the small plates of his armour were woven together with silken threads of scarlet. The young General bowed to the knight in answer to his prostrations and said: "Are you the knight Sano Genzaemon Tsuneyo?"

"Yes, I am he," answered Sano.

"Then," answered the young man, "I have to

present you to some one!" and he made a sign to an attendant.

Upon this the servant pushed open the screens of an inner room, and the Regent Saimyoji Tokiyori, who had been reported dead for a year, was revealed, magnificently dressed in his robes of office. Over his armour he wore a sacerdotal robe of rich brocade, and on his head a white head-dress.

Bewildered by all the strange things that were happening to him, and fearful of he knew not what, the knight had kept his face to the ground. He heard the rattle of armour and the swish of heavy silk moving towards him over the mats, and he wondered if it were not all a dream.

Then a voice said: "Oh, Sano Genzaemon — is it you? It is long since I saw you! Look up! Don't be afraid! Don't you know me?"

The poor knight knew at once that he had heard that voice before, and at last found courage to raise his head and to look at the resplendent figure that addressed him.

An exclamation of surprise burst from the lips of Sano, for he recognized in the personage who addressed him the priest whom he had sheltered on the night of the great snowstorm a year agone.

"You are surely," said Sano after a pause, "the travelling priest who passed that night of the great snowstorm under my roof last year, are you not?"

"Yes, I am that priest, and also I am the Regent Saimyoji Tokiyori."

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"Oh!" exclaimed Sano, bowing to the ground, "pardon my rudeness to you that night, for I did not know who my august visitor was," and his heart filled with fear at the remembrance of his unceremonious behaviour on that occasion.

Then the ex-Regent spoke again, and this time solemnly: "Sir Sano, you have no need to apologize, far from that. Do you remember what you said to me that night when the snowstorm took me to your house? You told me that through unfortunate circumstances you were now obliged to work like a farmer, yet if ever the occasion arose that should sound the call of knights to arms, you would, regardless of your shabby accoutrements, answer the summons and come forth in the spirit of a *samurai* to do glorious deeds worthy of your sword once more before you died! Herewith I give you back the thirty villages in the district of Sano, of which you were robbed by your unworthy kinsman. And do you think I have forgotten your kind action when you burned your precious trees, the last relics of your prosperous past, to minister to my comfort during that terrible storm? The glow of that fire remains in my heart to this day. By way of expressing my thanks for your hospitality that cold and dreary night, in return for the *Matsu* [pine tree], I am

going to give you the village of *Matsu-ida*, in the province of Kodzuke; in the place of the *Ume* [plum tree], the village of *Umeda*, in the province of Kaga; and for the *Sakura* [cherry tree], you shall have *Sakurai*, a village in the province of Etchiu."

As the knight listened to these golden words of fortune, which dropped like jewels from the mouth of the beneficent Regent, it seemed to him as if he must be dreaming, it was all so unexpected. He could not speak, for the tears rose to his eyes, and sobs of joy choked his utterance. When at last he looked up, he was alone. He made his way out of the mansion as in a trance, oblivious of all around him. The news of his promotion and of the favour he enjoyed in the estimation of the Regent had already spread outside, and the men who had laughed and jeered at him before now smiled graciously and bowed respectfully as he passed along the ranks.

So Sano Genzaemon returned to Kodzuke, not as a poor farmer, but as a lord under the special favour of the Regent, having won the esteem of all his countrymen by his knightly conduct in adversity.

All rejoiced that faithfulness, honesty, and kindness had received their just reward, and none more than the good Regent Tokiyori.

SHIRAGIKU, OR WHITE CHRYS-ANTHEMUM

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SHIRAGIKU, OR WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUM

ON the outskirts of a remote village at the foot of Mount Aso, in Kiushiu, a bell was slowly pealing from a Buddhist temple. It was the season of autumn and the twilight was falling fast. Over the lonely place and the gloom of the deepening dusk of night the solemn music, reverberating across the hills, seemed to toll the transientness of all things earthly.

Not far from the temple was a small cottage. At the door stood a young girl anxiously waiting for her father to come home. From time to time she wiped away the tears which fell from her eyes, and her face and attitude expressed great sorrow. She was but fifteen years of age, and as she stood there, a young and slender figure, she looked like a cherry-blossom of spring in the falling rain.

She was alone, for her father had gone out to hunt some days before and had never returned, and she had had no tidings whatever of him since. She and her father were all in all to each other; her mother was dead and her elder brother was only a

name to her; she could not remember him; he had run away from home when she was a small child, and no one knew what had become of him since.

As White Chrysanthemum, her heart full of sorrow and foreboding, watched and waited for her father's return, she started at everything, — at the leaves falling from the trees, at the sighing of the wind in their branches, at the dropping of the water from the bamboo pipe which brought the hill-stream to the house; as these different sounds from time to time caught her ear expectation made her hope that they might be the footsteps of her father coming home. But the hours passed by and still he did not return.

As the mists rose and the clouds began to close over the mountain, the loneliness of the scene was deepened by the plaint of insects chirruping in the grass, and by the slow pattering on the broad banana palm leaves of the rain just beginning to fall.

At last the dreariness and stillness of approaching night oppressed the girl so much that she could bear it no longer, and she made up her mind to go in search of her father.

It was a sad sight to see her as she ran out from the bamboo gate and turned to give a last look at the little home nestling in the shelter of the pine trees. Then resolutely she turned away and set her face towards the mountain path. On

her head she wore a large mushroom-shaped rain-hat, and with a stick in her hand she began to climb up the rough thorny pass into the depths of the mountains, as they towered range upon range one above the other and were lost in the distance and blackness of night.

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The rain fell more and more heavily, and as the girl stumbled up the steep pass she had often to wring her sleeves, which were now wet with rain as well as with tears. So absorbed was White Chrysanthemum in the thought of finding her father, whom she had watched climb this very road three mornings before, that she hardly noticed that the storm gave signs of lifting. Suddenly the rain ceased, the clouds cleared, and the moon shone brightly. The change in the weather at last roused the girl to look about her, and she saw that the path now led her downward to the valley. With a sigh of relief she quickened her pace.

She had walked for about two hours when she saw at some distance in front of her a single yellow ray of light shining through the gloom. Had she come to a house where she might possibly hear tidings of her father? As this hope dawned upon her, she eagerly hastened towards the light.

She soon reached an old Buddhist temple standing in the shadow of a group of pines and cryptomerias. From within came a voice chanting the

Buddhist scriptures. Who could it be studying in so remote a place at that hour of the night?

Shiragiku entered the gate and in the moonlight which made everything visible saw that the whole place was in a dilapidated condition; the fence was falling in many places, weeds grew all over the garden and between the flagstones, as if no one ever trod the path; even the posts which supported the gate shook in the wind.

White Chrysanthemum walked up to the porch and knocked on the heavy wooden door. Not until she had knocked and called several times did she hear any stir within; then some one answered in a subdued voice, the storm-shutters were pushed aside, and a young bonze appeared. He started when his eyes fell upon the girl, and he stared at her silently as if wondering who she could be or what had brought her there at that hour.

Shiragiku, seeing his scrutiny, drew near and said in a low sweet voice: "I am looking for my father. He went out hunting some days ago and has never come back. I am indeed sorry to trouble you, but will you be so kind as to tell me if any one has come to this temple either for rest or food within the last two or three days?"

The girl spoke so quietly and looked at him so gently that the young bonze was reassured in a moment. Her evident distress appealed to him, and when he looked at her again he saw that she

was as beautiful as a flower; her skin was white as snow, her jet-black hair, disordered by the storm through which she had passed, fell like the graceful branches of a willow tree over her shoulders; her large almond eyes were sad and full of tears, and as he gazed upon her it seemed to him that she could not belong to the earth, that she must be a *tennin*—an angel from the Buddhist Heaven. He asked her to enter the temple and said: "Tell me who you are and whence you come, and what brings you out this stormy night. I will listen to your story if you will tell it to me."

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The wind had risen again and was blowing in gusts round the temple and whistling through the chinks and crannies of the old building, while from the garden came the mournful cries of an owl. The desolation and strangeness of the place touched the girl's sorrow to the quick, and she burst into tears. As soon as she was able to speak, she wiped her eyes and said between her sobs: "I am the daughter of a certain *samurai* of Kumamoto City. Our house was once rich and prosperous, and our hearts were full of joy; we lived happily, knowing nothing whatever of care or sorrow. When the war[1] broke out all was changed; the grass round our house was stained with blood, and even the wind smelt of blood;

[1] The war of the Restoration.

families were scattered far and wide from the homes where they were born, and the air was rent with the cries of parents seeking their lost children and of children calling for their parents who could no longer hear them. Pity is no word to express the feeling which filled the heart at these sights. My father likewise went to the war, and my mother then escaped with me as far as Mount Aso. There she found a tiny cottage in the shadow of the temple, and with the money she had managed to bring with her we lived as best we could. As we were afterward told, my father fought with the rebels. When we heard that, we were greatly astonished, and our sleeves were never dry with wiping away our tears. Day by day, morning, noon, and night, we waited, hoping that my father would return — thus the summer passed. Autumn came and the wild geese flew across the sky in flocks toward the south, but there came no news of my father. My mother pined away with grief and anxiety, till at last she died. Thus before we knew whether my father was alive or dead, I was left alone in life. I felt as if I were dreaming in a dream. Whenever I think of that time my heart is pierced with sorrow. My days were passed in weeping at my misfortunes and in bemoaning my unhappy fate. Had it not been for the kindness of neighbours in the village, I should not have been able to live.

"Last spring my father came back and found me out. I told him of my mother's death. Since then he has never ceased to grieve. I tried to cheer him by telling him that it was the fate of all mortals to die, but my words brought him little comfort, and in this sad way we passed our time. The other day he went out hunting, and since then has never returned. Again, I was left alone with no one to look to for help. Unable to bear the loneliness any longer, I started out this evening to look for him and have come thus far. Our family name is Honda, my name is Shiragiku, my father's name is Akitoshi, my mother's name was Take, and my elder brother's Akihide. I can hardly remember Akihide, for when I was a small child he ran away, fearing my father's anger because of his bad conduct. But though he left us, my mother and I never forgot him. In the morning when it rained and in the winter evenings when the wind blew chill we longed for him to come again to the shelter of his home, but from that day to this we have heard nothing of him and know not what has become of him. My mother gave me many messages for him, firmly believing that one day we should meet again, and that he would yet fulfil his duty as a son and restore our house to its former prosperity and happiness. In this hope she died."

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As Shiragiku proceeded with her story the

young bonze listened with eager attention. At these words his face changed with sudden emotion, and the tears fell from his eyes. After some moments he said to her: "Poor, poor girl! Your story is a very sad one, and I feel for you in your many troubles. You can go no further to-night; rest here in peace until the dawn!"

As he spoke it seemed to Shiragiku that his voice was familiar to her, and though she could not remember having seen him before, yet for some unaccountable reason she felt that he was no stranger. His manner was so kind and gentle and sympathetic as he went and came bringing food for her supper and quilts for her to sleep upon, that memories of her early home and childhood stirred her heart. Her thoughts went out to the runaway brother; if he would only return he would be about the same age as the young bonze, and surely as good as he to any one in distress. Glad was she to have found a place of rest for the night. With many humble prostrations she thanked her host for his hospitality, and apologized for all the trouble she had given him.

When he withdrew, bidding her "good-night," she knelt in supplication before the shrine at the end of the room, where Amida Buddha and Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy, reigned in peace above the lotus and the burning of incense. Only through the mercy of the gods could she hope to

find her father, only through their help would her long-lost brother ever come back to those who waited for him year after year. For many minutes she knelt on, praying earnestly, then, worn out with grief and fatigue, she rose from her knees and lay down to fall fast asleep.

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At the hour when the hush of night is deepest, Shiragiku saw her father enter the room and draw near her pillow. The tears stood in his eyes and in a sad voice he said: "Shiragiku, I have fallen over a precipice, and now I am at the bottom of a chasm many hundred feet deep. Here the brambles and bamboo grass grow so thick that I am unable to find my way out of the jungle. I may not live till the morrow, so I came to see you for the last time in this world."

As soon as he had finished speaking, White Chrysanthemum stretched out her hands and tried to catch hold of his sleeves to detain him, crying: "Father! father!" But with the sound of her own voice she awoke.

She sprang up expecting to see her father, but there was nothing in the room except the night-lantern glimmering faintly. While she was wondering whether the vision were a dream or a reality, the dawn began to break and the beating of a drum throbbed through the temple. White Chrysanthemum rose soon after sunrise, ate the simple breakfast of rice and bean-soup she

found slipped into her room, and quickly left the temple. She did not wait to see the kind priest, though he had asked her to do so, saying that he would do what he could to help her; for she had remembered his diffidence the night before, and thought that very likely he belonged to a sect which forbade its priests to converse with the world, and she felt sorry that she had disturbed him.

Her dream was so vividly real to her that it seemed as if she heard her father calling to her for help; so making all possible speed she set out once more with the faith and simplicity of childhood to find him. Far off in the woods the bark of a fox could be heard, while along the path the cloudy tufts of the *obana*[1] rustled as she passed. Shiragiku shivered as the cold morning wind pierced through her body. As she pursued her way along the rough mountain pass wild creatures scuttled away, frightened, from before her into the woods, and overhead the birds sang to each other in the trees.

At last she reached the top of the pass, to find it covered with clouds, and it seemed to White Chrysanthemum as if they must carry her away with them in their onward sweep. She sat down on a stone to recover her breath, for the climb had been steep. In a few minutes the mists began to clear away. She stood up and looked about

[1] An autumn grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*).

her, hoping that she might find some trace of her father, but as far as eye could reach nothing but mountains, range after range, could be seen riding one above the other in the blue sky.

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Suddenly a noise in the bushes behind her made White Chrysanthemum start, and before she could flee a band of robbers rushed out upon her. They seized and bound her tightly. She cried out for help, but only the echoes answered her. Down the mountain they led her till they reached the valley; for a whole day they hurried her along till they came to a strange-looking house.

This was in such a neglected condition that moss covered the walls, and it was so closely shut up that the sunbeams never entered the rooms. As they approached the place, a man who seemed to be the chief of the band came out, and as he caught sight of the maiden, said with an evil smile: "You 've brought a good prize this time!"

The robbers now untied Shiragiku's hands and led her into the house and then into a room where dinner was prepared, with rice and fish and wine in great quantities. Then they all sat down, and as they began to eat, it seemed to her that they were a lot of demons. The chief passed some food to her and pressed her to eat. The long walk in the bracing air of the autumn day had made Shiragiku so hungry that in spite of her fear and distress she was glad of the food. At last, when she

had finished her meal, he turned to her and said: "That you 've been caught by my men and brought here must be the work of fate. So now you must look upon me as your husband and serve me all your life. I have a good *koto* [the Japanese harp] which I keep with great care, and to show your gratitude for this marriage you will have to play before me often and to cheer me with your songs, for I am fond of music. If you refuse to obey me, I will make your life as hard as climbing a mountain of swords or walking through a forest of needles."

Shiragiku felt that she would rather die than marry this man, but she could not refuse to play the *koto* for him. The *koto* was brought by one of the men at a word of command from the chief and placed before the girl, who began to strike the chords, her tears falling fast the while. She played so well that even those hard-hearted robbers were touched by her music, and one or two of them whispered together that hers was a hard fate and they wished that they could find some means of saving her.

Outside the house in the shadow of a large tree stood a young man, watching all that went on and listening to the music. By the voice of the singer as she sang, he knew that the player was she whom he sought. No sooner did the music stop than he rushed into the house and attacked the

robbers with great fury. Anger gave strength to his onslaught, and the bandits were so taken by surprise that they were paralyzed with fear and offered no resistance. In a few minutes the chief was killed, while two others lay senseless on the mats, and the rest ran away.

Then the young man, who was dressed in the black vestments of a priest, took the trembling girl by the hand and led her to a window, through which the moonlight streamed. As Shiragiku gazed up in gratitude and wonder at her deliverer, she saw that he was none other than the young priest of the temple, who had been so kind to her the night before.

"Don't be afraid!" he said quietly and soothingly; "don't be afraid! I am no stranger, I am your brother Akihide. Now I will tell you my story, so listen to me. You cannot remember me, for you were only a little child of three when my bad conduct roused my father's anger and I ran away from home and started for the capital. I embarked on a small vessel and after sailing along for several days I reached Waka-no-ura, passing the island of Awaji on the way. From Waka-no-ura I proceeded on foot. It was the close of spring and the cherry-blossoms were falling, and the ground was covered with the pink snow of their petals; but there was nothing of the joy of spring in my heart, which was heavy at the thought

of my parents' displeasure and the fearful step I had just taken. As soon as I reached the capital, I put myself under the charge of a priest and went through a severe course of study, for I had already repented of my idle ways and longed to do better. Under my good master's guidance I learned the way of virtue. My heart was softened by knowledge, and when I remembered the love of my parents, I regretted my evil past and never did the sun go down but I wept in secret over it. So the years went by. At last the pain of homesickness became so great that I determined to return home and beg my parents' forgiveness. I hoped and planned to devote myself to them in their old age and to make amends in the future for the shortcomings of the past. But insurmountable difficulties beset me in my new-formed purpose. War had broken out, and the face of the country was entirely changed. Cities were turned into wildernesses, weeds grew tall and thick all over the roads, and when I reached our province it was impossible to find either the old home or any one who could give me the slightest clue as to the whereabouts of you all. Life became a burden to me. You may imagine something of what I felt, but my tongue fails to describe my misery. I was desolate with no one belonging to me, so I resolved to forsake the world and become a priest, and after wandering about I took up my abode in

that old temple where you found me. But even the religious life could not still my remorse. I was haunted by the fear of what had become of my father and mother and sister. Were they alive or were they dead? Should I ever see them again? These were the questions which tormented me ceaselessly. Morning and evening I prayed before the shrine in the room where you slept last night —prayed that I might have news of you all. Great is the mercy of Buddha! Imagine the mingled joy and sorrow I felt when you came yesterday and told me of all that had happened since I left home. I was about to make myself known to you, but I was too ashamed to do so. It was, however, harder for me to conceal my secret than it would have been to tell it, for I longed to do so with my whole heart and soul. In the morning when I came to the room and found you gone, I followed after you in fear lest you should fall into the hands of the bandits who haunt these hills and thus it was that I saved you. You can never know how glad I am to have done this for you, but alas! I am ashamed to meet my father because of the remembrance of the past! Had I done my duty as a son, had I never run away wickedly from home, how much suffering I might have saved my mother and you, poor Shiragiku! Terrible indeed is my sin!" And with these words the young man drew out a short sword and was about to take his own life.

When Shiragiku saw what he was going to do, she gave a loud cry, and springing to his side seized his hands with all her strength, and stopped him from doing the dread deed. With tender sisterly words she tried to comfort him, telling him that she knew his father had forgiven him, and was living in the daily hope of his return — that the happiness and solace he could now give him in his old age would more than atone for the past; she begged him to remember his mother's dying prayer that he would establish their house and keep up the ancestral rites before the family shrine when his parents were dead. As she spoke, he desisted from his desperate purpose. The peace of night and the stillness of the moonlit world around them brought balm to both their troubled hearts, and as they bade each other good-night the silence was unbroken save for the cry of the wild geese as they flew across the sky.

In the early morning the brother and sister left the house, hand in hand. They had not gone far when they heard pursuing footsteps, and looking back they saw two or three of the men who had escaped the night before coming after them. Akihide bade his sister run for her life, while he stayed behind and engaged the robbers in a fight and so gave her time to escape.

Shiragiku did as she was told and fled through the woods under cover of the trees. On and on she

went, till at last she reached a place of safety out of sight. But her heart, beating wildly with fear, was behind with her brother, wondering what had happened to him, whether he had vanquished the bandits or had been killed by them. Who can describe her anxiety? She had found her brother only to lose him in this sad and uncertain way. Afraid to retrace her steps, yet anxious to know what had become of him, she climbed to the nearest hill-top to try if she could see anything of him, but around her there was nothing but hills and pine woods.

As she looked about her, she saw near by a little shrine, and, overcome with the terror of all that had befallen her within the last two days, she made her way towards it with trembling steps, and kneeling down offered up a fervent prayer for help and for her brother's and father's safety.

An old man who was cutting down trees in the forest saw her weeping there, and his heart filled with pity for the young girl. He drew near and asked her to tell him what was the matter. On hearing her sad story he led her to his home, saying that he would take care of her.

It was a quiet mountain place in the woods. The ground was covered with pine needles, the chrysanthemums round the humble cottage were fading, and the bell-insects were feebly tinkling in the grass, for the last days of autumn were passing.

Here in this retired spot Shiragiku lived in peace. The old wood-cutter and his wife, having no children of their own, loved her as a daughter, for such she seemed to them, so amiable, patient, and helpful in all her ways was she, and they told her that they hoped she would remain with them to the end of their days. Shiragiku did her utmost to show her gratitude to the old couple for their kindness to her, but she never ceased to think of her father and brother and to look forward to the time when they would once more be a united family. In spite of all discouragements she cherished this hope. Now and again she implored the old man to let her go and look for them; but he would not permit this, saying that it was not safe for an unprotected girl to roam the hills, that if she did so she would be sure to fall into the hands of robbers again, and that it was far wiser for her to wait till her father and brother found her than for her to seek them, not knowing where they were. Her reverence for old age made her obey him, and she waited in patience, hoping each day she rose that her father and brother would find her before the evening came.

During these quiet years she grew in beauty day by day and passed from girlhood into the bloom of early womanhood. The poor cotton robe — all that the wood-cutter could give her — in no wise hid her loveliness. She was like a fine chrysanthe-

mum shining among the wild flowers of the plain.

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She was soon the acknowledged beauty of the place, and one spring the village chief sought her in marriage. The wood-cutter, out of respect to the suitor's position, at once gave his consent.

When, however, the old man told Shiragiku of what he planned for her, her dismay was great. She begged him with tears to make excuses for her; she told him that she could not think of marriage till she had found her father. But he would not listen, saying that it was the best thing for her now to be settled in life.

That night the girl covered her face with her sleeves and wept long and bitterly when she lay down to rest.

"How can I obey the old man?" she sobbed to herself. "No, never — never! I remember now more vividly than ever what my mother told me when she was dying. 'You are not my own child, Shiragiku,' she said; 'one day many years ago I was returning from a visit to a temple. When passing through a field, I found a little baby crying in the midst of some white chrysanthemums. Who can have been so wicked as to forsake such a lovely child? I said to myself; there must be some reason for this! I carried the little one home and brought her up as my own child. You are that child. Praying for blessings on you, I named you

Shira-Giku, because I found you in a bed of white chrysanthemums. There is also something else I must tell you before I die. There is some one in the world to whom you must look as your brother and husband; he is none other than our son, who ran away rather than meet the anger of his father. We have never heard of him since he left, but if he is still living I am sure he will come back to his family. Your father and I — your adopted parents — have always destined you for him; it is my last behest that you should refuse all other men and wait to marry our son, for come back I am sure he will one day; then live a happy life together in the old home, praying for our souls when we have left this world.' My mother's words are still in my ears. I hear them more clearly than ever," she sobbed to herself. "I owe her my life; how can I disobey her bidding? And yet how can I refuse to do as the old wood-cutter asks, for he has been as a parent to me these last three years? What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do?"

Day by day the old man pressed her to accept the suitor and day by day in great perplexity she put him off. At last, seeing no way of escape from being unfilial to the memory of her mother and from fulfilling the old man's wish, she made up her mind to die and put an end to the struggle.

At this time the *nakodo* (go-between) of the marriage came and presented her with a roll of

brocade for the *obi* (wide sash) and of damask silk for the *kimono*, the betrothal gift of the bridegroom. The old man and his wife rejoiced at what they considered her good fortune and regarded the matter as settled, and the neighbours came to congratulate them and to catch a glimpse of the chosen bride of their chief.

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Shiragiku, however, had made up her mind. That night during a rainstorm she stole out from the wood-cutter's cottage. She looked back wistfully many times at the place which had fed and sheltered her for so long; but she told herself that there was no other way than this, for she must hold as sacred law her mother's last behest. In the despair of the last few weeks, when this unexpected marriage was being forced upon her, she had lost the hope of finding her father and brother again; but she would die rather than marry a stranger against her foster mother's dying wish.

The night was dark, for the sky was clouded. Down the empty street of the village Shiragiku hurried with the tightly closed thatch-roofed cottages on either side. Out across the silent stretches of rice-fields she ran till she reached the blackness of a pine wood, seeking for some spot where she could die.

The roar of water at last reached her ears, and she knew that she had come to a river. The moaning of the wind in the pine trees sounded to her

like the voices of pursuers. She stopped to look around, but there was no one to be seen. The path leading down to the river grew rougher and darker as she entered the shadow of the trees, but Shiragiku never faltered in her determination to reach its bank. At last the water glimmered like a wide white ribbon in the gloom of night.

"I will now die," said Shiragiku, weeping; "but alas! how sad my father and brother will be when they hear of my death. Forgive me," she cried aloud, "oh, my father, oh, elder brother, that I die first. I will await your coming beside my mother in Heaven."

Shiragiku now reached the edge of the bank and was about to dash down into the river with a prayer to Buddha on her lips when she found herself caught from behind and a familiar voice said to her: "Wait a moment! Tell me who you are and why you seek to take your life."

It was her brother Akihide. She gazed up at him in the dim light of the moon just coming forth from the clouds. They both clasped each other by the arms and burst into tears.

"Little sister!" "Elder brother!" cried the sister and brother both together in that shock of simultaneous recognition. In the speechless moments which followed they heard the sound of a flute from the village near by break the silence of the night — they watched the rain cease and the

SHIRAGIKU WAS ABOUT TO DASH DOWN INTO THE RIVER

stars shine out one by one. Akihide led Shiragiku to a large stone; here they sat down and told each other all that had happened since they last parted.

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While they were talking the day broke; together they watched the sun rise in splendour and glisten and glow in thousands of rain-drops on the trees and grass around them.

"Let us go and tell the kind old wood-cutter and his wife all that has happened," said White Chrysanthemum, smiling through her tears; "I must bid him farewell and we must thank him, for indeed I owe him my life."

They walked to the village and went at once to the old man and told him their story. Shiragiku begged him to forgive her for not doing as he wished. Then Akihide told him that it had been his mother's dying wish that he should marry White Chrysanthemum and keep up the family name. With tears the brother and sister thanked the old couple for their ever-to-be-remembered kindness to White Chrysanthemum in her distress. They promised to come and see them whenever they could and to let them know all that happened to them in the future, a promise which they faithfully kept. They at last took leave with many gentle words on both sides.

Then Akihide and Shiragiku began a happy journey homewards, walking over the hills by day,

and passing the night at some farmhouse or cottage they came to on their way.

When the brother and foster sister reached the little house in the valley at the foot of Mount Aso, it was early in the month of May; the cuckoos were singing, and the air was fragrant with the scent of orange-blossoms. In spite of the years of desertion and neglect, the tiny home still stood safe and firm as when Shiragiku had left it, though the grass had grown tall and thick in the garden and moss covered the roof. The sun was shining brightly over all, and the balm and gladness of the spring morning rested on their young souls.

For a moment White Chrysanthemum paused at the bamboo gate and said: "This is our home, elder brother!" Then quickly they ran down the garden, quickly they pushed back the paper screen of the entrance and entered. Were they waking or were they dreaming? Who should they see coming forward to meet them but their father, whom they had almost given up as dead. For a moment they were all silent. It seemed as if their hearts must burst with inexpressible joy.

"Father! Father!" cried Akihide and Shiragiku together, "is it really you? Are you safe and well?"

"Children, my children!" cried the astonished father, "have I found you at last?"

Then Akihide knelt before his father, and with his face bowed to the ground, confessed every-

thing, and begged his father's forgiveness for the past. He told him all—how bitterly he had repented his behaviour, how hard he had tried to make a new life for himself, how long he had searched for his parents in vain, his one wish being to make amends, how wonderfully he had met Shiragiku when he had at last despaired of ever finding any one of his family again, of all that had happened since her coming to the temple.

The father listened gravely to the long sad story; then with gentle words he forgave his son; he bade him to cease all self-reproach, and as he spoke the kind words his eyes grew dark with unshed tears. When Shiragiku told her story he commended her filial piety, her courage, and her patience. Now that they had as by a miracle of the gods found each other again, nothing should ever separate them.

Thus the little family found again the vanished happiness of other years.

Shiragiku now busied herself preparing the evening meal, and as she filled her father's and her brother's wine-cup the father told them all that had happened to him.

"When I went out hunting three years ago, I fell over a precipice, and found myself at the bottom of a chasm a hundred or more feet deep. I was quite unable to get out, so I lived on wild fruits and stream water for many days.

"One morning I chanced to see a band of monkeys climbing the chasm by means of a large wistaria-vine which formed a bridge from side to side. I followed their example and soon found myself free on the hillside once more. I returned here with all haste, only to find that Shiragiku had disappeared. Imagine my distress. I inquired of every one in the village, but no one had seen her go away, and there was no one who could tell me anything about her. There was but one thing left for me to do and that was to try and find her. So I set out walking through province after province, looking for her, but all in vain. At last I gave up my quest as hopeless and returned here only yesterday."

The joy of the little family was great beyond all words. This unexpected meeting — the utmost desire of their souls — was a happiness which took away their breath and left them silent with wonder and thankfulness. Only one thing saddened them — that the good mother, who had died of grief and anxiety, could not be present to share in this joyous reunion, and to know that her prayer was answered and that the long-lost son had returned to his family. But she was not forgotten — they spoke of her and missed her. Shiragiku rose and opened the little shrine standing in a closed recess at the end of the room, and taking some sticks of incense set them burning before the name-tablet set up in memory of her mother; for though Shiragiku now

knew that she was not really her own mother, yet she always thought of her as such, for she had known no other. Father and son and adopted daughter then knelt and with hands clasped and bowed heads prayed before the little altar.

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Shiragiku now fetched and tuned her *koto* (harp) and sang the songs she knew her father liked to hear. This done, she accompanied her brother, while he paced through some stately measures of the classic dance. The father, calling Akihide and Shiragiku to his side, told them that he wished them to marry, as his wife had always planned. He was now an old man, he said, and could not expect to live much longer, and before his death it was his ardent wish to see his house established. He then named an early date for the wedding. Akihide, having only entered upon a religious novitiate, was able to obey his father without breaking any vows. He bowed his willingness and Shiragiku blushed happily. She was content in fulfilling her good foster mother's last behest.

Now the sun set, a crane cried on the hill at the back of the house, and the stars came out one by one in the soft and darkening turquoise of a May twilight, and peace and joy reigned in the home and the hearts of the three wanderers.

THE PRINCESS OF THE BOWL

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THE PRINCESS OF THE BOWL

LONG, long ago, in old Japan, there lived near Katano, in the Kawachi Province, a prince named Bitchu-no-Kami Minetaka or Lord Minetaka, as we should say in English. He was not only a very wealthy man, but it was reported that his house was full of rare and wonderful treasures. He was also a learned man and the master of many accomplishments. His life was passed in the luxurious leisure of the rich, and he knew nothing of care or want — perhaps he hardly realized what such words meant.

But above all the treasures in his storehouse, beyond the wealth of his revenue which came pouring in year by year in bushels of rice, he prized his only child, his daughter. The prince and his wife brought this daughter up with great love and tenderness as if she were some rare flower or fragile butterfly. So beautiful indeed was the young girl that in looking at her their friends and relations wondered whether the Sun Goddess Amaterasu had not come to earth again in the form of the little Princess.

Nothing came to mar the happiness of this united little family till the daughter was fifteen years of age. Then suddenly the mother, who had never known a day's illness in her whole life, was taken ill. At first it seemed to be but a slight cold, but her health, instead of getting better, only grew worse and worse. She felt that she would never recover and that her end was very near, so she called her daughter beside her pillow, and, taking a large lacquer bowl from the bedside, she placed it on her daughter's head, saying: "My poor little child, I want you always to wear this bowl. At your innocent age you can understand nothing of the world in which I must leave you motherless. I pity you with all my heart; ah! if you were at least seventeen or eighteen years old I could die with more peace of mind. I am indeed loath to go, leaving you behind so young. Try to be a good daughter and never forget your mother."

The woman's tears fell fast as she spoke, and her voice was broken with sobs while she stroked her little girl's hand. But things are not as one wishes in this life. All the doctor's skill could not save the mother; she died and left her daughter behind motherless in the world.

Words cannot tell the grief of the bereaved father and child, it was so great. At last, after some time had passed and the ordinary routine of

life in Prince Minetaka's household was resumed, the father noticed the bowl which his daughter wore on her head and which fell so low as completely to hide her face; and calling her to him tried to take off the unsightly head gear. But his efforts were in vain. All the retainers and then the servants were summoned to see what they could do, but no one could remove the bowl; it stuck fast to the child's head. No one could understand the mystery. The bowl had been put on most simply; why could it not be as easily taken off? This was the question which the whole household asked again and again.

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And the young Princess, besides sorrowing for the loss of her mother, was greatly troubled at the knowledge that, though born physically perfect, she was now quite disfigured for life in having to wear the ugly bowl which her mother for some unknown reason had placed on her head. If no one succeeded in taking the bowl off, she might have to wear it her whole life. That would indeed be a terrible affliction. But in spite of all she never forgot her mother even for a moment, but carried in her heart the memory of her love and care through every hour of the livelong day. Every morning, as soon as she rose from her bed on the mats, she placed the little cup of tea and the bowl of rice before the tablet bearing her mother's name in the household shrine, and having set the incense

burning she would kneel and pray for the happiness of her mother's soul.

The days passed into weeks, the weeks grew into months, yet the dutiful daughter never failed morning or evening thus to pray for her lost mother.

In the mean time the family relations often came to advise her father, Prince Minetaka, to marry again.

"It is not good for you to be alone," they said. "Marry a suitable woman and entrust her with the keeping of your house and the care of your young daughter, who is now of an age when she most needs a woman's care."

At first Prince Minetaka would not listen to them, the memory of his dead wife was too fresh and his sorrow too keen for him to be able to lend a willing ear to their persuasion. He felt that it was a reproach to her he had loved even to think of putting another woman in her place. But as the months went by he found himself much tried with the affairs of the household, and was often so perplexed that he thought perhaps it might be better to listen to the advice of his meddling relations. So without thinking much about the future he decided to take a second wife.

His friends were glad to find that their persuasions were of avail at last, and with the help of go-betweens they arranged that he should marry

a certain lady of noble family whom they deemed worthy and suitable in all respects.

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So the soothsayers were consulted and a lucky day chosen for the marriage, and the new wife was then installed in Prince Minetaka's home amidst the congratulations of both families. The little Princess alone was sorrowful in her inmost heart at seeing some one take her mother's place; but it would be unfilial to her father to show that for one instant she did not approve of his second marriage, so she hid her unhappiness and smiled.

On seeing the little Princess for the first time, the stepmother was shocked at the deformity of the bowl, and said to herself that never had she even dreamed that there could be any one in the world doomed to be such an ugly cripple. She not only despised but hated her stepchild from the moment that she saw her. This new wife was indeed a very different woman from her predecessor, whose heart was so good and kind towards all who came near her that the idea of disliking, much less hating any one was impossible to her.

A year passed by and the stepmother gave birth to a child. Jealousy for her own infant daughter now made her hate her stepchild more and more. It was her great desire to see her own daughter first in Prince Minetaka's affection, and in order to attain her utterly selfish end she knew she must oust her stepchild from the house. To begin with,

she determined to estrange the father from the little Princess by telling him unfavourable stories of her behaviour and her character. It is needless to say that she invented these stories.

The Bowl-Wearing Princess soon understood that her stepmother hated her. Her grief and anxiety seemed to her more than she could bear. There was no one in the house in whom she could confide, and she knew that to complain of her stepmother to any one, even to her father, would be undutiful. What was she to do in her trouble? To whom could she go but to her own mother? So as often as she could she went to her grave. Here she would kneel and pour out the woe that filled her heart.

"O mother, why must I live on in the world with this ugly bowl on my head? My stepmother truly has a reason for hating such a child about the house. Now that she has a daughter of her own, all the more must she want to get rid of me! And my father, who used to love me so much, he too will surely soon give all his love to his new daughter and forget me! Alas! Alas! the only place that is left to me to come to without fear of dislike is the side of my own dead mother. O mother, sitting upon the lotus leaves in Paradise, receive me now upon the same leaf. Oh! that I might thus escape the sorrow of this world and enter upon the way of Buddha!"

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But the Boundary of Life and Death separated the mother and child, and though she prayed earnestly and with tears, lifting her whole heart and soul up in her despair, no answer came to her eagerly listening ear. As she knelt in the little graveyard only the sound of the wind sighing in the pine trees answered her. But the thought that she had told her mother everything comforted her as she returned home.

The stepmother was told of her stepdaughter's frequent visits to the graveyard, and instead of being touched with pity for the motherless girl, she made use of the occasion still further to slander the child to her husband.

"I am told that the Bowl-Wearer, your daughter, goes to her mother's grave and curses me and my child because of her jealousy! What do you think of that? Has n't she a wicked heart?"

Day by day she watched the little girl wend her way from the house to the graveyard and day by day she repeated in her husband's ear her pretended fears. In her heart she knew quite well that it was only love and unhappiness that sent her unfortunate stepchild to the grave of her mother. At last she said that she was afraid of the evil that might befall her and her child through the Bowl-Wearer's malice; she had decided that they could no longer live together in the same house.

The father, who had hitherto never listened much to his wife's tales, was at last persuaded by her importunity into believing them true. So in an evil hour he summoned his daughter and said: "What is this I hear, wicked daughter? Your deformity has long since been a source of irritation to me, but as long as you behaved well, I put up with it. Now I am told that you go every day to the grave of your mother to curse my wife and her innocent little child. It is impossible for me to keep under my roof any one who is so crippled not only in body but in mind as you are. Go wherever you will from to-day, but longer in this house you shall not stay!"

While the father was speaking these terrible words the stepmother sat behind him, smiling in derision at the poor little Princess and in triumph at the success of her wicked stratagem.

"Woe to the Bowl-Wearing Princess!"

The servants, at the command of her father, took off her silken robes and put on her a miserable common cotton gown, such as beggars wear, and drove her out into the road.

The Princess was altogether bewildered at the suddenness of her misfortune.

She felt like a wanderer in an unknown land, lost in the darkness of night. So distracted was she at first that she could only stand still in the middle of the street, not knowing which way to

turn. But people, passing by, stared at her so that she soon realized that she must not stand like that all day, so she began to move whither her feet led her.

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In this way she came to the bank of a large river. As she stood and looked at the flowing water, she could not help thinking that it would be far better for her to become the dust of the river-bed than endure the hardships of her present lot. Would it not be better to die and so join her mother than wander about like a beggar from place to place begging her rice? With this thought she made up her mind to drown herself. But the roar of the river was so great as it dashed over the boulders of its rocky bed that the maiden hesitated at first. Then, summoning up all her courage with a desperate effort, she jumped in.

Strange to say, however, the bowl, which had hitherto been such a curse to her, was now a blessing. It lifted her head clear above the water and would not let her sink. As she floated down the stream a fishing-boat came by. The fisherman, seeing a big bowl rising out of the water, lifted it up. His surprise was great when underneath the bowl he found a human being. Thinking it to be some strange monster, he threw it upon the bank.

The poor girl was at first stunned by her fall. When she came to herself, she said that it was a pity she could not die as she had wished. She got

up from the ground and, in a miserable plight, for her clothes were dripping with water, began to walk on, and after some time she found herself in the streets of a town.

Here the people, as soon as they saw her, began to point the finger of scorn at her, and to jeer and laugh at the strange-looking bowl on her head.

"Oh! oh! do you see this queer creature with the bowl coming down from the mountains? Look! Look!" Then as some of them came nearer they said: "It is strange that a monster should have such beautiful hands and feet. What a pity this creature was not born a woman!"

Just then the lord of the district passed by on his way home from the hunt. Seeing the gathering of people, he stopped and inquired what was the matter. His retainers pointed out the Bowl-Wearer to him. From the grace of her slender form, and the modesty of her bearing, Lord Yamakage judged her to be a young woman, though he could not of course see her face, which was completely hidden by the bowl. He ordered the Bowl-Wearer to be brought to him. Two or three of his retainers went to execute his orders, and came back bringing the poor unhappy Princess with them.

"Tell me the truth," said Lord Yamakage to the girl; "who or what are you?"

"I am the daughter of one Minetaka by name, and my home is near Katano. My mother, when

dying, placed this bowl on my head, and since her death it has become so firmly fixed there that no one can take it off, and I am obliged to wear it always, as you see me now. Because of the unsightliness of my appearance I have been driven away from my home. No one takes pity on me, and I am forced to wander from place to place without knowing where to lay my head at night."

"Well, well!" said the kind man. "Your story is truly a pitiful one. I will take the bowl off for you!"

When he had said these words, Lord Yamakage ordered his retainers to pull off the bowl from the girl's head. The men, one and all, tried to free the Princess from the obnoxious bowl, but it stuck so obstinately to her head that all their efforts were useless. It even uttered loud cries and groans of pain as they tugged at it. Every one was dumbfounded at the inexplicable mystery, and at last they all began to laugh.

When Lord Yamakage saw that there was nothing to be done to help her, he spoke to the Bowl-Wearer again. "Where are you going to spend to-night?"

"I am quite homeless," answered the Bowl-Wearer, in a heartbroken way, "and I do not know where I shall lay my head to-night. There is no one in the wide world to take pity on me, and every one who sees me either jeers or runs away because of the bowl on my head."

Lord Yamakage felt his heart fill with pity and said: "It may bring luck to have such a strange creature in my house!" Then he turned to the girl and said: "How would you like to come home with me for the present, Bowl-Wearer?"

And with these words he gave her in charge of his attendants, who took her with them to their lord's house.

It was an easy matter to take her to the house, but not so easy to find her a place there. His wife objected to her becoming a waiting-maid, saying that no one could bear the sight of so strange a creature about. So the servants at last took her to the bath-room, and told her that she must fetch and carry the water and look after the fire for heating the bath. This was to be her work!

As the little Princess had never done such rough work in the whole of her life, she suffered much in obeying these cruel orders; but she resigned herself to her fate and tried with all humility and patience to perform her hard task faultlessly.

But her lot was far from being a happy one, even though she had found the safe shelter of Lord Yamakage's home. The young and uncouth tradesmen, coming on errands to the house, made fun of her, some even trying to peep under the bowl to get a glimpse of the beautiful face beneath. While she was thus persecuted in the daytime, in the evening the servants gave her no rest with

their peremptory orders. "Hot water here!" "Cold water there!" "Get the bath ready!" and so on.

The poor girl bore all this rude usage patiently; but as she went about her work she could not help remembering the old times of her happy childhood, spent under the loving care of her own dear mother, of the honoured place she had held in her father's household till within the last few days; and as she carried the hot water or stoked the bath-fire she pretended that those fast-falling tears of sadness were caused by the fumes of charcoal and the steam which rose from the hot water. When she crept weeping to bed at night it seemed to her as if the past day must be an evil dream.

Lord Yamakage had four sons. The three elder ones were married to daughters of three of the leading men of the province. The youngest son, Saisho, was still unmarried. He had been away for some time in the gay smart capital of Kyoto. But now he returned to his home.

Now every time he went to take his bath or called for hot water, he saw the Bowl-Wearing maiden, and, as he had a kind and compassionate heart, he could not but be touched by her unhappy appearance, and her modest and gentle behaviour and her quickness and diligence at her work.

Whenever he had an opportunity he spoke to

the Bowl-Wearer, and to his surprise he found that she was no servant, that she spoke in the refined language of his class, and though so young she was well read in the literature and poetry of her country, and could answer a literary allusion wittily and to the point. When at last she told him something of her sad story, he knew, though she did not tell him, that she belonged to some family of high rank. From this time on he often spoke to the girl, and he found that the stolen conversations with her grew to be the chief pleasure of the day.

One day he managed to take a sly peep under the bowl. The face, even though overshadowed by the huge cover, was of such rare beauty that he fell madly in love with the Princess, and made up his mind that none other than the Bowl-Wearer should be his wife.

His mother soon heard of Saisho's friendship for her husband's protégé, and when she learned that he had promised to marry her she forbade him to think of such a thing. She at first thought that her son could not be in earnest, but when she sent for Saisho and asked him seriously if what she had been told was true, he answered: "I really and truly intend to make the Bowl-Wearer my wife!"

His mother was not a little angry at his determined front. How could Saisho fall in love with

a girl with a bowl on her head? Who ever heard of such ridiculous nonsense?

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Then she sent for her son's nurse, the woman who had nursed him from the day he was born, and together they tried to deter him from his purpose.

Saisho was obliged to listen to all they had to say, but did not answer them. He could not say "Yes" to their demand that he should give up all idea of marrying the Bowl-Wearer, and he knew that if he firmly said "No" he would raise up such a storm of opposition that no one could tell how it would end. He knew that the life of the Bowl-Wearer was a truly pitiable one, and his determination to marry her and help her out of all her difficulties remained unchanged. His mother soon saw that her son would by no means listen to her persuasions, and her anger was great towards the Bowl-Wearer. She almost made up her mind to drive her from the house before her husband could know what happened.

Saisho, on hearing this, told her that if the girl was driven away he would go with her. The mother's distraction can be imagined, for she was thwarted in every way. She at last said that the Bowl-Wearer was a wicked witch who had thrown her spells over Saisho and would not leave him till she had compassed his death.

She determined if possible to separate them by

fair means or foul. For a long time she pondered over the matter, and at last hit upon a stratagem which she trusted would rid the house of the presence of the obnoxious girl. Her plan she called "The Comparison of the Brides." She would hold in the house a family council of all the relations, and assemble the wives of her three elder sons, and before the whole gathering compare them with the Bowl-Wearer whom Saisho had elected to marry. If the Bowl-Wearer had any self-respect she would be too conscious of her deformity and her poverty, and too ashamed to make an appearance, — would leave the house to escape from the ordeal. What an excellent plan! Why had she never thought of this before?

So the mother sent messengers post-haste to all the family and relations, requesting their presence at a "Bride Comparing Ceremony" and a feast which would close the ceremony.

When Saisho heard of this he was greatly troubled, for he knew what it meant. His mother meant to drive the girl he loved from the house by comparing her with his brothers' rich and pretty wives. What was to be done? How could he help the poor Bowl-Wearer?

The little Princess saw how unhappy he was, and blamed herself, she was so sorry for him.

"It is all because of me that this trouble has come to you. Instead of happiness I have only

brought you worry. Woe is me! It is better that I go away at once," said the girl.

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Saisho told her at once that he would never let her go alone; that if she went he would go with her.

At last the day fixed for the ceremony of the "Comparison of the Brides" came round. Saisho and the unhappy little Bowl-Wearer rose before the dawn, and taking each other by the hand left the house together.

Notwithstanding his love for the Bowl-Wearer and his resolve to marry her at whatever cost, Saisho was very sad at the thought of leaving his parents in this way. He told himself that they would never forgive his obstinacy and probably would refuse to see him again, so this parting was probably forever. He felt at each step as if his heart was torn backwards. With slow steps he and the Bowl-Wearer, hand in hand, wended their way down the garden. No sooner, however, did they put their feet outside the gate than the bowl on the girl's head burst with a loud noise and fell in a thousand pieces upon the ground.

What untold joy for both of them! Saisho, too astonished to speak, looked for the first time full on the girl's face. The beauty of the damsel was so dazzling that he could compare it only to the glory of the full moon as it rides triumphantly above the clouds on the fifteenth night of September. Her figure, too, now that the dwarfing bowl

had gone, was more graceful than anything he had ever seen. The young lovers, too happy for words at this unexpected deliverance, could do nothing but gaze at each other.

The mother's purpose in covering her daughter's head with the hideous bowl was at last made clear. Fearing that her daughter's beauty would prove to be a peril to her, with no mother to watch over her, she had hidden it thus, and the intensity of her wish had assumed supernatural power, so that all attempts to remove it were useless till the moment came when it was no longer needed; then it broke off of its own accord.

At last the lovers stooped to pick up the pieces of the bowl, when to their amazement they found the ground strewn with treasures and all that a bride could possibly need for her portion. There were many gold *kanzashi* (ornamental pins for the hair), silver wine-cups, many precious stones and gold coins, and a wedding-garment of twelve folded *kimono*, and a *hakama* of brilliant scarlet brocade.

"Oh, surely," said the Princess, "these treasures must be what my mother prepared for my marriage portion. Indeed a mother's tender love is above everything!"

She wept with mingled feelings of joy and pain, —pain of the remembrance of her mother and joy at her present unlooked-for deliverance and the certainty of future happiness.

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Saisho told her that there was now no need for her to leave the house. She was not only a richly dowered bride, but now that her face was no longer hidden by the hideous bowl, so beautiful that even a king would be proud to wed her. She need no longer fear to be present at the coming ceremony and feast. So they both turned back, and hastened to prepare for the trial which awaited the Bowl-Wearer, but Bowl-Wearer now no longer.

As soon as day broke, the house was full of movement, servants hurrying to and fro to usher in and wait upon the relations, who now began to arrive. The murmur of their chattering was like the sound of breaking waves on a distant shore, and the object of all this talk was nothing else than the poor little Princess. The servants told every one that she was in her room getting ready for the approaching feast, and they all thought it strange that she had not fled away for shame. Little did they dream of all that had happened to her!

At last the hour of the "Bride Comparing Ceremony" arrived. The family and the relations all took their places at the upper end of the big guest-hall of thirty mats.

First entered the bride of the eldest son. She was only twenty-two years of age, and as it was the season of autumn, she wore a brightly coloured *kimono* and walked into the room in a stately fashion, with her scarlet *hakama* trailing over the

cream mats behind her. Her costume was indeed beautiful to behold! To her parents-in-law she brought gifts of ten rolls of rich silk and two suits of the ceremonial gown called *kosode* (each *kosode* consisting of twelve long *kimono* folded one over the other), all of which she placed on a fine lacquer tray to present them.

Next came the bride of the second son. She was twenty years of age, and was of the aristocratic type of beauty, thin and slender, with a long pale oval face. She wore a heavy silk robe, and over this a flowing gown of gold brocade. Her *hakama* was embroidered profusely with crimson plum-blossoms. She came into the room quietly, with a gentle bearing, and offered as her gifts of presentation thirty suits of silk robes to her husband's parents.

Then came the bride of the third son. She was only eighteen years of age. Quite different from the first two proud beauties, she was very pretty and dainty, and though small had more sweetness and charm in her manner than her sisters. Her dress was of rich silk embroidered with cherry-blossoms. She presented thirty pieces of rare and handsome crape to her parents-in-law.

The three sat side by side in their conscious pride and prosperity, their beauty enhanced by the sheen and splendour of their silken gowns. As the father and mother, uncles and aunts and relations,

all gazed upon them, no one could say who deserved the palm of superiority, for they were all lovely.

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At the lower end of the room, far away from every one else, was placed a torn mat. It was the seat destined for the Bowl-Wearer.

"We have seen the three elder brides of the house, and they are all so handsome and so beautifully robed that we are sure there are no women to compare with them in the whole province," said the relations. "Now it is the turn of the Bowl-Wearer, who aspires to marry the youngest son of the house. When she comes in with that ridiculous bowl on her head, let us greet her with a burst of laughter!"

The roomful of people eagerly waited for the Bowl-Wearer to come, even as the birds sitting on the eaves of a house long for the morning. The three brides were also curious to see the cripple girl of whom they had heard so much. How dared such a creature aspire to become their sister? they haughtily asked each other.

But the mother felt differently. She in no wise wished to see the girl appear, for she had arranged this day's ceremony, hoping that the Bowl-Wearer, knowing herself to be a deformed beggar-maid, would be too ashamed to appear before such a grand company and would flee away rather than face the trial. On asking the servants, however, she was told that she was still in the house, and she won-

dered what the girl could be doing, and almost regretted what she had done.

Lord Yamakage and his wife at last grew impatient and sent word to the Bowl-Wearer that she was to hasten, as every one was waiting for her.

The servants went to the back of the house where the Bowl-Wearer had her little room of three mats, and gave her the message.

"I am coming now," she answered from within the paper screens.

The Princess now came out and entered the room of the "Bride Comparing Ceremony," where every one was waiting for her. She was only sixteen years of age, but so beautiful that she reminded them of the weeping cherry-blossoms in the dew of a spring morning. Her hair was as black as the sheen on a raven's wing, and her face was lovelier far than that of any human being they had ever seen. Her under-robes were of rich white silk, and her upper *kimono* was purple, embroidered with white and pink plum-blossoms. As the stars pale before the fuller glory of the moon, so the three elder brides shrank into insignificance beside the dazzling beauty of this maiden.

To all it seemed as if one of the *Amatsu Otome* (heavenly virgins) who wait upon the Goddess of Mercy had glided into the room. They had expected to see a poverty-stricken girl with a large bowl stuck upside down on the top of her head,

and they were lost in astonishment when they beheld the Princess in all the radiance of her loveliness and the splendour of her rich clothes.

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The Princess was about to sit down in the seat left for her, but Lord Yamakage made a place for her beside his wife, saying that he could not allow her to sit in such a lowly spot. She now presented to her father-in-law a silver wine-cup on a gold pedestal, with one hundred *rye* (old *yen* in gold), and thirty rolls of silk which she brought in on a beautiful tray. To his wife she presented the rarest and most delectable fruit of ancient Japan, Konan oranges and Kempo pears, and one hundred pieces of coloured cloth which she put upon a gold stand.

In her surpassing beauty, in the grace of her carriage, in the richness of her costume, in the sumptuousness of the gifts to her parents, she left the other brides far and away behind. Speechless with wonder and admiration, every one present could not but gaze at her. Before the Bowl-Wearer had appeared, the three elder brides had seemed beautiful enough, but now the difference was as marked as when a sparkling jewel is placed side by side with a crystal; and as the crystal suffers from the comparison, so did they.

Saisho's elder brothers were looking between the cracks of the sliding screens, and they were filled with envy at Saisho and his good fortune in becoming the husband of such a beautiful princess,

for such they now felt she must be. Not even her rivals could deny that she was bewilderingly fair to look upon; but they whispered among themselves that unless she were skilled in all womanly accomplishments, for all her beauty she would be no better than a common man's daughter. She must play on the *koto* at once. No one could perform on that instrument without years of instruction. If they waited till the next day, who knows, she was so clever that she might get Saisho to teach her. So the jealous brides proposed aloud that they should all play a quartette; the eldest would play the *biwa* (lute), the second the *sho* (flute), the third the *tsuzumi* (a kind of a small drum beaten with the hand), and they asked the Bowl-Wearer to join them and play the *koto* (harp).

The Princess, who was very modest, at first refused; but on second thoughts, she said to herself: "They ask me to do this because they wish to try me, thinking me to be ignorant of such accomplishments. Well, then, I will play, for my mother taught me." She pulled the *koto* near her, and slipping the ivory tips on her fingers began to stroke chords. The astonishment of every one was great, for she played with great skill.

Saisho, who had hidden himself in the room behind a lacquer cabinet, and was watching with the utmost eagerness all that went on, could hardly keep in his hiding-place, he was so delighted.

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The three brides, who were quite put out of countenance, for their performance could in no wise be compared to that of the little Princess, now proposed that she should write a poem.

"Write a poem, a *tanka* [a poem of thirty-one syllables], which shall describe the character of each season, such as the blooming of the peach and the cherry-blossom in the spring, the orange and wistaria in summer, and the beauty of the chrysanthemum in autumn."

"Oh," said the Bowl-Wearer, "this is indeed a task too difficult for me. Is there nothing else you will give me to do instead of this? I can take care of the bath-room, and pull up water from the well, and heat the bath. Since this is my daily occupation, how is it possible that I should even know how to write a poem, much less compose one?" She blushed as she spoke.

But her rivals insisted, and so at last she took up a poem card and a brush and wrote:—

Haru wa hana,
Natsu wa tachibana,
Aki wa kiku,
Izure to wakete,
Tsuyu ya okuran.

The cherry-blossom of spring,
The orange-flower of summer,
The autumn chrysanthemum,
Perplexed between them all,
Alike on each the dew may fall.

She showed not the least hesitation in writing these lines, and her handwriting was so beautiful that even the famous Tofu[1] and her brush could not have surpassed it. The three brides retired from the room, grumbling and speaking evil of the Bowl-Wearer.

"She must be a witch," they said. "Probably the spirit of the ancient Tamamono Maye!"

Lord Yamakage, now quite pleased with her, handed her a cup of *saké*. He gave his full consent to her marrying his son Saisho, and bestowed upon them as a settlement twenty-three hundred *cho* of land, together with twenty-four servants to wait upon them, and for their bridal chamber he allotted them the Hall of Bamboos.

So Saisho and the Bowl-Wearer were at last married, and all their troubles ended. Never was there such a merry wedding, such a lovely bride, or such a happy bridegroom. The days flew into weeks, the weeks flew into months, for the flight of time is unnoticed when one is happy.

At last one day Saisho said to his wife: "I cannot believe you to be the daughter of a common man. Will you not tell me who your father is? I should like to know. Whatever wrong you have suffered, why hide your parentage any longer?"

The Princess knew that if she told her husband the truth, the name of her cruel stepmother would

[1] *Tofu.* A lady famous for her beautiful handwriting.

SAISHO AND THE BOWL-WEARER WERE AT LAST MARRIED

have to be mentioned, and it would be most unfilial to speak of the woman's cruelty, for she was her father's wife, so she decided not to tell Saisho to what family she belonged. She made some excuse, saying that he should know all in good time, and begged him to wait a little longer.

When they had been happily married for a year, she gave birth to a son. The bliss of the faithful young couple now seemed complete. Yet with her ever-growing happiness her thoughts turned more and more to her father. What had happened to him in these past years? How she longed to show him her little son! She said to herself that if this were granted she would be the happiest woman in the whole world.

Now let us turn back and see what happened to Lord Minetaka and his wicked wife. As time went on, her vicious disposition only became worse. At last it became so unbearable that all the servants took their leave. There was now no one left to care for her child or the house, and the fortunes of the family gradually declined. Lord Minetaka became poorer and poorer. Where once in the days of the first wife there had been sweet peace and harmony, discord now reigned in the house.

Lord Minetaka grew weary of his life. He decided to leave his home and set out on a pilgrimage. He started at last to wander on foot from

province to province and from temple to temple, learning from the priests all he could of Buddhist lore. He had plenty of time for reflection; and no longer harassed by a scolding wife, he began to ponder over his past life. No words can tell how much he regretted having listened to her slanderous stories about his little daughter; and when he thought of how he had allowed her to be driven from her home, like an outcast or a beggar, his nights were sleepless.

He asked himself every day what could have happened to her all this time. He would search for her through the length and the breadth of the land, and if she were still alive, he told himself that he would surely meet with her again. In every temple he came to he prayed that he might find her, wheresoever she might be. On and on he wandered over the country, stopping for the night at the different villages he came to on his way.

At last he reached the famous Kwannon of the Hatsuse Temple, of the Yamato Province. Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy, grants to mortals whatever they need the most, the greatest desire of their hearts. Here Minetaka ardently prayed for his lost daughter, prayed that she might be preserved from all ill, and that Kwannon would mercifully grant them a speedy meeting.

Saisho and his wife were devoted to this very temple, and often used to visit it to offer thanks-

giving for their mutual happiness, and to pray for their children. Now this day, as was their wont, they had come with their three little sons and some of their retainers. The little boys were beautifully dressed in silk and crape, and the whole party had the appearance of a nobleman and his retinue.

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The retainers went up the temple steps first to clear the way, and found a pilgrim before the temple shrine lost in earnest prayer.

"Oh, pilgrim!" they cried, "out of the way! Our lord comes to worship, make way instantly!"

The man, hearing himself spoken to in this way, got up and looked at the approaching party, moving aside at the same time to let them pass. He was travel-stained and worn out with fatigue, and it was easy to see that he was broken down by some sorrow. As the little boys passed him, he looked at them eagerly, and as he did so the tears fell from his eyes. One of the retainers, who thought his behaviour strange, asked the pilgrim why he wept.

"Those children," answered Lord Minetaka, for it was he, "remind me so much of my daughter, for whom I am searching, that when I looked at their faces the tears fell in spite of myself;" and he told the man all that had happened, glad for once to find a sympathetic listener on his lonely wanderings.

When the Princess heard the story, she told the retainers to bring the pilgrim to her. As soon as they led him to her a glance was enough for her to recognize that, aged and emaciated as he was, the pilgrim was none other than her father.

"I am the Bowl-Wearer!" she exclaimed quickly, catching hold of her father's sleeve and bursting into tears, overcome with joy and filial affection at this unexpected meeting.

Saisho congratulated his wife and her father on their happy reunion, and after many bows and salutations on both sides, he said: "I felt sure that my wife was of noble birth, though she always remained silent when I questioned her as to her parentage. Now I understand it all. So, after all, she is the daughter of Lord Minetaka of Katano."

He then insisted that his father-in-law should give up his wanderings and make his home with them for the rest of his days.

So Lord Minetaka at last found his good daughter married to one of his own rank, and so happy that even in dreams he could have wished for nothing better for her. What a joyous home-coming it was that day for the Bowl-Wearer, as she led her father back with her and presented her three little sons to him, and showed him her beautiful home, and told him how good and faithful her husband had been to her while she was only the unhappy and despised Bowl-Wearer!

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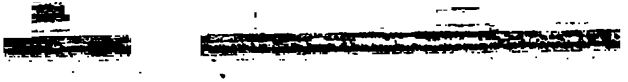
They all felt that their cup of happiness was full, and lived together more harmoniously than ever, and in their mutual joy all past sorrow was forgotten.

Such is the story of the Bowl-Wearing Princess, which is told from grandmother to mother and from mother to daughter in all households in Japan.

THE STORY OF LAZY TARO



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THE STORY OF LAZY TARO

LONG, long ago, in the province of Shinano there lived a lad called Monogusa Taro. Monogusa was not his surname. The word means "lazy," or "good-for-nothing," and he was so nicknamed because by nature he was so lazy that he would not even take the trouble to pick up anything that was lying in the way. When the neighbours asked him to do something for them, saying, "Do this," or "Do that," he would shrug his shoulders and say, "It is really too much bother," and go away without attempting to obey, or even wishing to be kind to those about him.

At last all turned their backs on him, and would have nothing to do with him. Strange to say, no one knew who his father or mother was, or from where he had come. He seemed to be a waif and stray that had drifted into the province of Shinano, and yet there was an air about him which excited interest and respect.

But this lazy lad, Monogusa Taro, had his dreams and ambitions. He wanted to live in a large house. In his imagination he pictured this house like a

daimio's palace. It was to stand in its own grounds and be closed by four high walls, with large roofed gates opening out on three sides of it. In the park-like garden he would have four miniature lakes, laid out in the four directions, north, south, east, and west, and each pond was to have an island in its centre, and dainty arched bridges were to span the distances between the islands and the shores of the little lakes. And oh! how beautiful the garden should be, with its miniature hills and valleys, its tiny bamboo forests and dwarfed pine trees, its rivulets and dells with little cascades. And he would keep all kinds of singing-birds in the garden, the nightingale and the lark and the cuckoo. And the house itself was to be large, with spacious rooms hung with costly tapestries of brocade, and the ceilings were to be inlaid with rare wood of fine markings, and the pillars supporting the corridors must be adorned with silver and gold. And he would eat off costly trays of lacquer, and the dishes and bowls should be of the finest porcelain, and the servants who glided through the rooms to serve him should be beautiful maidens clothed in silk and crape and brocade, daughters of ancient families, glad to enter his house, so that they might learn the etiquette and manners of a princely house. Such were the day-dreams and visions of Lazy Taro. Once or twice he spoke of these things to a kind neighbour who brought him food and little

gifts, but he was laughed to scorn for his pains, and so he kept silent henceforth and dreamed only for himself.

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But he had to come down to stern reality. Instead of the grand palace that he dreamed of building, he had to content himself with a little shed by the roadside. Instead of the fine pillars of his visionary palace he put up four bamboo posts; and in place of the grand walls he hung up pieces of grass matting; and instead of the fine cream-white mats on which the foot glides softly and noiselessly, he spread a common straw mat. Here Lazy Taro lay day and night doing nothing, neither working nor begging for his living, only dreaming away the hours and building castles in the air of what he would do and have if only he were rich.

One day a near neighbour who felt sorry for the lad sent him by his servant a present of five rice-dumplings. Lazy Taro was delighted. He was in one of his dreamy moods and ate up four of them, without thinking what he was about. When he came to the last one, somehow he suddenly felt unwilling to part with it. He held it in his hand, and looked at it for some minutes. It took him a long time to make up his mind whether he would eat it or keep it. At last he decided to keep it until some one was kind enough to send him something else. Lazy Taro, having made up his mind on this point, lay down on his straw mat again to

dream away the hours with his foolish visions of future grandeur and to play with the remaining rice-dumpling which he still held in his hand. He was tossing it up and down when it slipped from his hand and went rolling into the road.

"How tiresome!" said Taro, looking after it wistfully as it lay in the dusty road; but he was so terribly lazy that he would not stir out of his place to pick it up.

"It is too much trouble," said Lazy Taro; "some one is sure to come along and pick it up for me."

So he lay in his shed and watched the dumpling in the road. When a dog, however, came along or a crow flew down to steal it, he drove them away by making a noise or by flapping his sleeves at them.

On the third day after this, the Governor of the District passed by on his way home from hawking. He rode a fine horse and was followed by a number of retainers. Now as Lazy Taro lay in his shed he saw the Governor and his suite coming.

"Now this is lucky!" said Taro. He did not care whether the approaching man was the Governor of the Province or a *daimio* or not. When the Governor was opposite the door of the hut Taro raised his voice and called out to the rider, asking him to pick up his dumpling and bring it to him. No notice whatever was taken of him. The procession

of riders went slowly by the hut. Then Taro called out still more loudly to make them hear.

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"Ho, there!" he shouted, "will no one do what I ask? It can't be much trouble to get down from your horse and pick up that dumpling for me!"

Still no one heeded him.

Then Taro got angry and shouted still more loudly: "What a lazy person you must be!"

Thus Taro arrogantly found fault with others, entirely forgetful of his own laziness, and talked to those older and better than himself in this hateful way. Had the Governor, whose attention was now directed to the little shed by the roadside, been an ordinary man, he would have given orders to his men to kill the presumptuous fellow on the spot; for a *samurai* of high rank in old Japan, in his domain and along the road, possessed the power of life and death over the lower classes. When a lord or any great dignitary rode abroad, the peasants and the farmers bowed themselves in the dust as he passed by. They dared not lift up their heads on pain of death.

But this Governor was an unusual man, and renowned throughout the district for his goodness and mildness of disposition. His curiosity too was aroused at the queer proceeding. He had heard of the strange Monogusa Taro, and he concluded that the boy in the hut must be he. So the Governor got down from his horse, and sitting on a stool that

one of his retainers placed for him opposite the hut, said: "Are you Monogusa Taro of whom the people talk?"

Taro, not in the least afraid, answered boldly that he was. He did not even move from his position on the mat to bow to the great man. He behaved just as indifferently as if he were a lord speaking to a servant.

"You are indeed an interesting fellow," said the Governor. "Now tell me what do you do to earn a living?"

"As my name tells you," answered Lazy Taro, "I do nothing. I lie in this shed night and day. I am Lazy Taro!"

"Then you must get little to eat!" said the Governor.

"It is exactly as you say!" answered Taro; "when the neighbours bring me food, I eat it; but when I get nothing I lie in this shed night and day just like this, sometimes for three and four and five days without eating!"

"I am very sorry for you," said the Governor. "Now if I give you a piece of ground, will you till it and grow your own rice and vegetables? What you do not want you might sell to the neighbours and so make a little money."

"You are very kind," answered Taro, "and I thank you; but it is too much trouble to till the ground to get my own rice. Why should I when I

can get people to give me just enough to live upon? No, thank you, I beg to be excused."

"Well," said the Governor, "if you don't like the idea of tilling the ground, I will give you some money to start in business. What do you say to that?"

"That would be too much trouble too, so I will remain as I am," said Taro.

The kind-hearted Governor could not but be astonished at the good-for-nothing boy's answer, but he was a man of great patience, and he felt sorry for Monogusa Taro.

"You are," he said, "as every one says, the laziest man in the whole of Japan. In all my experience of all sorts and conditions of men, never have I come across such a don't-care, happy-go-lucky creature as yourself — but as it is your nature, I suppose there is no help for it. Your condition is a pitiful one. I can't let you starve in my district — which you certainly will do if you go on like this."

Then the kind-hearted Governor took out a piece of paper from his sleeve, and on this paper with brush and Indian ink he wrote an order to the effect that the people of his dominion of Shinano were to provide Monogusa Taro twice daily with three *go* of rice and a little *saké* once a day to cheer his spirits. Whoever disobeyed the order must quit the district at once. This order the Governor had

published and made known throughout the whole province.

To the people of the province it seemed a strange command, and they were lost in amazement; but however strange they thought it, they had to obey the Governor's order. So from that day on Taro was taken care of and fed by his neighbours with rice and *saké* daily.

Time slipped slowly by in the rustic place, and for three years Taro lived in ease and plenty, as free from care as the birds of the air. To all appearance he was perfectly satisfied with himself and his useless life, and he seemed to desire nothing better.

At the end of three years the feudal *Daimio* of Shinano, who always lived in the capital, advertised for a man-servant who was young and strong. One of Taro's kindest neighbours suggested that this was a good opportunity for Taro to make a beginning and that he ought to apply for the place. But others shook their heads and said that Taro was a good-for-nothing fellow, who would never do any good in the world — he would only be a trouble wherever he went.

"Look," they said, "how he behaved to the good Governor, how he dared — just think of it — to ask that great man to pick up the rice-dumpling he had dropped in the road, because he was too atrociously lazy to move out of his shed to get it

for himself! Had the Governor been any one else, he would have had him sworded to death on the spot."

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But in spite of all the neighbours' croaking and grumbling, the first man persisted in his idea that the right thing for Taro to do was to try for the place, regardless of opposition. To every one who raised an objection, he answered wisely: "Don't you know the saying that 'Stupid people and scissors depend on the way they are used for their usefulness'; so even this Lazy Taro may change for the better if he is taken up to the capital and made to work. Let us all persuade him to go into service, and let him for pity's sake have a try at something or other. Who knows but this may prove the turning-point in his life? Taro may yet become a useful hard-working man in time, if he is given his proper chance."

When the proposal was first made to Taro, he was very unwilling to do as he was told. He said he knew nothing of the ways of a lord's house; and how could he work, seeing that he was Lazy Taro, who had never done a stroke of work in his life? But his neighbours and friends were determined to make him go. Every day they came to his shed, and talked to him, persuadingly, and at last Taro came round to reason and said that, to please them, he would at any rate go and try to do his best — if he failed, he could n't help it.

When Taro said this, his friends were delighted, and said they would help him get ready. They gave him decent clothes in which to make an appearance at the *Daimio's* house and then some money for the journey. In this way Lazy Taro left the rural province of Shinano, where he had lived for so many years, and started for the capital of Kyoto. Just as Tokyo is the seat of government nowadays, so Kyoto was in olden times. The Emperor — the Son of Heaven, as he was called — dwelt there in a magnificent palace, and all the great *daimios* lived near him in state, surrounded by their retainers. The streets of the Imperial City were beautifully built and spotlessly clean, and the houses were far grander than Taro had ever dreamed of — with great sloping roofs and picturesque gates and park-like gardens enclosing them. Very different indeed was the capital from the province of Shinano, from which Taro had come.

The Japanese have a saying, "As different as the moon and the turtle," and what can be more utterly different from the Queen of Night, riding above the clouds in her own bewitching radiance and beauty, attended by innumerable stars, than the mud-burrowing turtle, who may sometimes be seen crawling out from his slime to dry his back in the sunshine? As Taro walked through the streets of the city of Kyoto, he thought of the

old proverb, and he said to himself that the Lady Moon was Kyoto and the turtle his old-fashioned Shinano.

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Then he noticed how fair of skin the people he met were, for the citizens of Kyoto are famous for their white complexions; and some say it is the purity of the water that gives them such fair skins, while others say that they are of a different race from the yellow-skinned people of the rest of Japan. And how elegantly every one was dressed!

Taro looked down at himself, and saw how dark his skin was, how long his nails, and how rough his clothes were. For the first time in his life he felt ashamed of himself, and repented of his past laziness.

Now he remembered that one of his neighbours in Shinano, kinder and more thoughtful than the rest, had put in his bamboo basket a silken suit of clothes, saying that Taro would be sure to want it in the capital, and that when Taro got on, as he felt sure, somehow or other, that he would, he might pay him back. Recollecting this, Taro stopped at a teahouse and changed his rough cotton suit for the silken one. Then he inquired for the residence of Nijo-Dainagon, the Lord of Shinano, and having made his way there, he entered the large gate and presented himself at the porch, saying that he had come in answer to an adver-

tisement of the Lord of Shinano for a servant, and he begged to be made use of.

When the lord of the house heard that a man had come from his own province to ask for the vacant place in his household, he came out himself to see Taro, and thanked him for his trouble in coming such a long way.

"Work well and diligently, and you will not find service in my house hard or bad!" said Lord Nijo.

Now, strange to relate, from the time that Lazy Taro was taken into the service of this *Daimio*, a great change came over him. He was from this time forth like another man. He showed great eagerness to please those set over him and worked with great industry. Before any one else was astir in the big household, he arose and swept the garden; he ran errands more quickly than the other servants, and sat up late at night to guard the gate. When Lord Nijo went out, Taro was the first to put his sandals ready, and the most eager to accompany him. So assiduous, so earnest was he in all he did, that his master was much impressed by his faithfulness and industry.

"How true is the proverb," said the *Daimio*, "that even the beautiful lotus blooms in the slime of the pond, and that precious gems are found in the sand. Who would have dreamt that this rus-

`tic would turn out to be such a jewel of a servant? This Monogusa Taro is a clever fellow, quite unlike any countryman I have ever seen."

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In this way Lazy Taro won the favour of his master, who gradually promoted him from the position of a menial servant to the higher service of a retainer.

One day, soon after his promotion, Taro had been summoned to the inner apartments to wait upon O Hime San, or the Honourable Princess, the *Daimio's* daughter. As he moved across the room, he fell over the Princess's *koto* and broke it.

Now the Japanese have always considered it a virtue to repress their feelings, whether they be feelings of joy or feelings of sorrow. No matter what happens, one must learn to present an impassive countenance to the world, whether the heart be bounding with joy or withering with pain. Instead of making a display of your emotion, control it and compose a poem or a beautiful sentence. Such is the training and etiquette instilled by custom, and more especially amongst the upper classes are these rules rigidly observed.

Now the Princess was a very high-born damsel, so, though she was sorely grieved when she saw that Taro had broken her favourite *koto*, instead of betraying any anger or impatience, she expressed her grief in an impromptu verse and repeated aloud: —

Kiyo yori wa
[Oh! from to-day]
Waga nagusami ni
[For my amusement]
Nani ka sen?
[What shall I do?]

Then Taro, who was very, very sorry for the accident and for the displeasure he knew he must have caused the Princess, was moved to the heart, and the words of apology and regret suddenly rose to his lips, in the form of the second half of the Princess's poem, and he said:—

Kotowari nareba
Mono mo iwarezu.

This has two meanings, because of the play on the first word *kotowari*, which means either a broken *koto* or an excuse. So Taro's couplet meant first that there was indeed good reason for the Princess's sorrow, and that he had no excuse to offer; and secondly, that as the *koto* was broken, he had no words wherewith to excuse himself.

The *Daimio* was sitting in the adjoining room and heard Taro answer his daughter in verse. His astonishment at finding that Taro was a poet was great. "Certainly, appearances are deceptive," said the *Daimio* to himself.

Now the next time that the *Daimio* went to Court, thinking to amuse the Palace circles with Taro's story, he told them first how he had taken a "potato-digger" (Japanese expression for a

country bumpkin) into his service, and then he told of the progress of the transformation of the rough rustic, who had proved himself to be such a jewel, into a valuable retainer, and last, and most astonishing of all, how Taro had turned out to be a poet. Every one in the Palace listened to the tale with much interest, and said that Taro's story was like a novel.

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At last this story reached the ears of the Emperor, who felt interested in the poetical rustic, and he thought that he would like to see Taro; for literary and poetic talent has always been held in high esteem in Japan and has in a special manner enjoyed royal patronage. The Emperor sent word to Lord Nijo that he was to bring Taro to the Palace.

So the next time that Lord Nijo went up to the Palace he ordered Taro to accompany him. So Taro at last had the highest honour that could befall a mortal, for he was commanded to enter the august presence of the Son of Heaven.

The Emperor sat on a dais behind the closely slatted bamboo blinds, with cords and tassels of gold and purple, so that he could see and not be seen, for he was thought to be too sacred for the eyes of his subjects to fall on him.

The *Daimio* Nijo prostrated himself before the throne three times, and then presented Taro. The Emperor, from behind the screen that hid him

from view, deigned at last to speak, and this is what he said:—

"I hear that you are a poet. Therefore compose a verse for me on the spot!"

Taro obeyed without any hesitation whatsoever. Looking about him for a moment for inspiration, he happened to glance into the garden, where he saw a nightingale alight on a blossoming plum tree, and begin to warble. So he made the nightingale and the plum tree the subject of his poem:—

Uguisu no
Nuretaru koe no
Kokoyuru wa
Ume no hanagasa
Moru ya harusame.

The meaning of this little poem of thirty-one syllables is that the nightingale's voice sounds tearful or moist because the flower-umbrella of the plum-blossoms lets through the spring rain, which damps the body of the bird sitting among the branches.

The Emperor was pleasingly impressed with Taro's talent and facility in expressing his graceful thoughts, and addressed him again, saying: "I hear you came from Shinano? How do you call plum-blossoms [*ume-no-hana*] there?"

Then Taro answered the royal question again, saying in verse:—

Shinano ni wa
Baika to iu mo
Ume no hana

Miyako no koto wa
Ikaga aruran.

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"In Shinano we call the plum-blossom '*baika*,' but of what they may call it in the capital I know nothing."

In this way Taro humbly confessed his ignorance of the ways of the capital.

"You are indeed a clever poet," said the Emperor, "and you must be descended from a good family. Tell me who was your father? Do you know?"

"I have no ancestors that I know of!" said Taro.

"Then I shall command that the Governor of Shinano make inquiries about you," said the Emperor; and therewith he commanded his courtiers to despatch a messenger to the far-away province of Shinano, with instructions to find out all he could about Lazy Taro and his parents.

After some time the Governor of Shinano learned through an old priest who Monogusa Taro really was, and the discovery was a startling one.

It appeared that many years before, a Prince of the Imperial House had been banished from Court circles and had come to the Temple of Zenkoji in Shinano. The Prince was accompanied by his consort. The royal young couple made this pilgrimage to pray Heaven for a child, for they were both sorrowful at being childless. Their prayers

were answered by the birth of a son within the year. This son was Taro. When the infant was but three years old, his parents died and the child was left with no one but the old priest to take care of him. When Taro was only seven years old, he strayed away from his guardian and was lost.

The royal couple had kept their secret well, and the old priest had only discovered who Taro was by finding some letters hidden away behind the Buddhist altar. Taro was the grandson of the Emperor Kusabuka, the second son of the Emperor Nimmu, the fifty-third Emperor of Japan. Taro's father had been banished for some misdemeanour at Court, and had hidden himself in disgrace in the rustic province of Shinano in the heart of the country, far from the gay capital and all who knew him. Thus it was that no one knew where Monogusa Taro had come from, who he was, or anything about him at all, and he had grown up like a common peasant, ignorant of his high estate and the exalted circle to which he belonged.

You may imagine the surprise of the Emperor when he learned that Taro was descended from the Royal Family. It was no wonder that he had shown such noble qualities as faithful service to his lord and love of poetry. His Majesty now bestowed upon Taro the highest official rank, and

made him Governor of the provinces of Shinano and Kai.

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Now Monogusa Taro returned to Shinano, the old province which had harboured him in his days of poverty — in great state he returned. No longer as Lazy Taro, the good-for-nothing rascal who lived in a straw shed, content with living upon the charity of his neighbours and friends, or whoever chose to take pity upon him, but as the new Governor, the man who through industry and faithfulness had won the esteem of Lord Nijo, and who through him was presented at Court. Once at Court, his talent for writing verses had aroused the interest of the Emperor, whose inquiries had established his high birth.

And so, greater than all expectations and more wonderful than dreams, had the transformation of Lazy Taro been. No longer a despised beggar by the roadside, he was now an honoured man, created new Lord of the Province by the Emperor. Nor did he now forget in these changed circumstances the kindness that had been shown to him in former times. He repaid and rewarded all those who had ministered to his wants in the days of his vagrancy; he forgot no one — neither those who had given him rice, nor those who had interested themselves in his going to Kyoto, nor those who had prepared him for his journey. He paid a visit to his old friend and benefactor, the ex-Governor, now retired from

active service, and took him many handsome gifts. His visions of a fine house were now realized, for he lived in just such a palace as he had seen in his day-dreams by the wayside. The palace had sloping roofs, just as you see in old Japanese pictures; it stood in the midst of beautiful gardens, surrounded by high walls and approached by three large gates. Lord Nijo gave him one of his daughters in marriage, and Monogusa Taro lived happily to the great age of one hundred and twenty years, and he left the world beloved, honoured, and lamented by all who knew him. Such is the wonderful and happy-ending story of Lazy Taro.

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